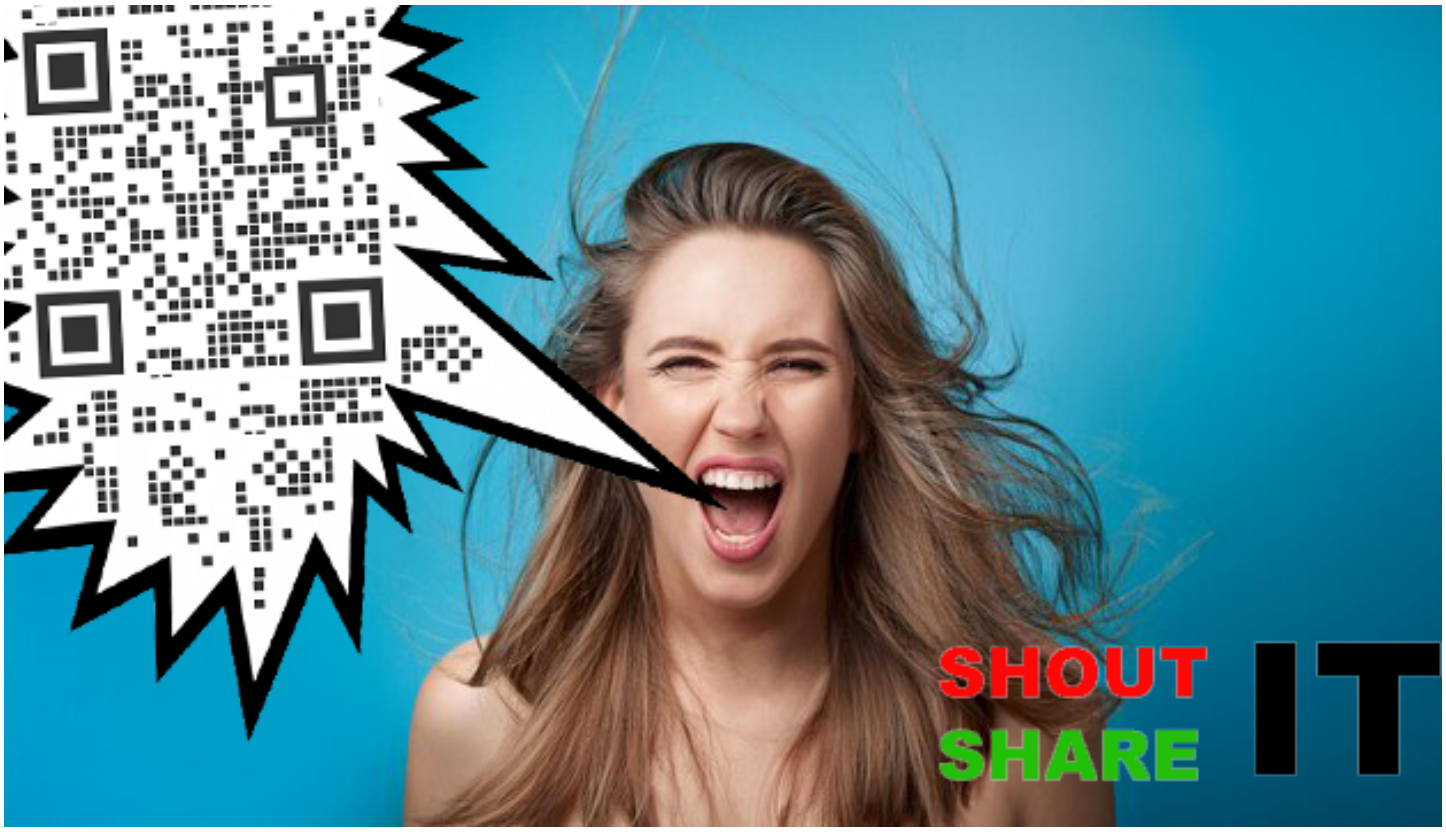
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ANIMALS
IN FOUR WORLDS
SCULPTURES FROM INDIA

Plate 1. Ganesha.
Monolithic sculpture, granite.
Ganesha temple, Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

NB1940 .S6 1989

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NOTE ON DATING

Most of India's ancient monuments cannot be provided with a precise date owing to the absence of historical records. A study of the evolution of architectural and sculptural styles, however, has enabled art historians to propose tentative dates for most of the major monuments. These dates may be taken as generally reliable within a particular century. But there do exist a few temples with inscriptions that contain the name of the royal or courtly patron or even the foundation date of the building. Thus the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal in the Deccan can be assigned to the 740s, and the Vishvanatha temple at Khajuraho in central India is known to have been erected in 1002. Yet, it must be emphasized, these accurately dated temples are always the exception. For the sake of consistency, therefore, a broad dating scheme has been retained throughout the volume.

ANIMALS
IN FOUR WORLDS
SCULPTURES FROM INDIA

Plate 2. Nandi in rocks.
Monolithic sculpture, granite.
Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

WENDY DONIGER

THE FOUR WORLDS

I. The Fourth Dimension

The title of this book refers to the perception of animals (more particularly, their representation in Indian sculpture) in nature, in the human world, in the divine world, and in the world of fantasy. These four worlds may be envisioned as physical or conceptual spheres, or as dimensions. The Hindus would probably see them as physical places—*lokas,* cognate with our own *locus*—where animals are found. For Hindus there are three physical worlds (hell, earth, and heaven) as well as a transcendent world (the world of ultimate reality or Godhead, *brahma,* the place to which one is released from all three physical worlds). They might also see the three physical dimensions set against the fourth dimension, Time. Indeed, it is only the fact that sculpture, particularly in stone, resists (for a while) the ravages of time that allows us to *see* the animals that the ancient Indians saw alive. Art is the fourth dimension, the transcendent world that cuts across the other three dimensions of space.

We in the West would probably see the four worlds as conceptual realms. We would begin with animals in their basic, untransformed condition—animals in nature—and move from there to the realm of their interaction with us (an actual transformation of their nature); from there we would move to the realms of the divine and the fantastic (imaginative transformations), assuming that the divine world is an extrapolation from

our observation of the world of nature. And, indeed, that is the scheme by which the images have been organized in this Western book about Indian animals.

The metaphor provided by animals in art is often a valuable bridge between what we think we know about certain common animals and what we think other people imagine when they attribute "fantastic" qualities to certain common animals. Animals and gods are two closely related communities poised like guardians on either side of the threshold of our human community, two others by which we define ourselves. Aristotle remarked that a man who could not live in society was either a beast or a god.[1]

The ways in which people think about themselves in relation to animals both reflect and are reflected by the ways in which they think about themselves in relation to the gods, for the process works in two opposite directions at once. The observation of the local fauna provides images with which people may think of their gods; whether or not people get the gods that they deserve, they tend to get the gods (and demons) that their animals deserve. On the other hand, the ideas that people have about the nature of the gods, and the nature of the world, and of themselves, will lead them to project onto animals certain anthropomorphic features, features that may seem entirely erroneous to someone from another culture observing the same animal.

One useful way of formulating the various responses of humans to animals is to look at the degree to which different cultures regard animals as other or non-other. Most people have criteria which force them to define certain animals as non-other, by virtue of their domestication, their intelligence, their beauty, or their apparently anthropomorphic ways. Generally, people do not eat animals that they define as non-other. Thus we would not eat dogs or dolphins or monkeys; Hindus will not eat cows. People whose criteria do not allow them to perceive any significant otherness in any animal—people, that is, who regard all sentient creatures as non-other—may become vegetarians. Indeed, the belief that all life—vegetable as well as animal—is sacred would logically lead to starvation. The Hindu view holds that human souls become incarnate in vegetables, but when these vegetables are eaten by people they are transformed into semen and reborn as people.[2] It is therefore necessary for humans to eat their vegetables, souls and all, in order to allow those souls to progress upward on the path toward ultimate release. Nevertheless, some measure of uneasiness continued to hedge the eating of not only animals but vegetables; an ancient text tells of a young boy who traveled to the other world and saw people being eaten, "soundlessly screaming,"

by vegetables (rice and barley) that they had improperly killed and eaten in life. The way to avoid such a fate, he was told, was to perform the correct ritual before eating.[3]

The hope that all animals may be in some sense even less other than they seem to be is the source of a myth that we share with Hindus and Buddhists, the myth of a magic time or place or person that erases the boundary between man and animals: the ancient time when humans spoke the language of animals; the magic place in the Looking-Glass forest where things have no names, where Alice can walk with her arms around the neck of a fawn; the person who lives at peace among the animals, like Francis of Assisi; or the child who is raised as a cub by a pack of animals—Romulus and Remus or Kipling's Mowgli. The time of this animal paradise finds a close parallel in the widely distributed myths about a time when gods walked among men, or men among gods; the place is like the high mountains where men mingle with the gods; and the individual who possesses the power of animal speech may be likened to the mythical character (often a shaman or a priest) who alone is able to traffic with the gods.

In these stories, the gods do not become human; a human becomes one of the gods. So, too, the ideal state of humans among animals is not one in which wild animals become tame (as they often do in reality). It is the state in which wild animals remain wild and speak their own language, and humans become wild, humans become once again innocent of civilization, and can speak with animals. It is a world where wild and tame have not yet come to have any meaning for man, or therefore for animals. The Garden of Eden is such a paradise of the past, and another is described in the Hebrew Bible as existing in the apocalyptic future:

> The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.[4]

In this magic time, the only companions of animals are innocent human beings, children, still wild, still unpolluted by civilization.

Many mythologies of animals are haunted by this lost or unattainable paradise. To be with the animals (or the gods) in this way would be to transcend our human condition entirely. In the Hindu myths of this genre, the humans among the animals eat "fruits

and roots"; in the Buddhist variants, they eat nothing at all (not being true humans yet) or they eat the earth itself, which is delicious and nourishing.[5] These two strategies, one realistic and one fantastic, provide natural alternatives to the food that men do in fact share with unmythical animals: meat. Often the myth does not tell us what the people and animals eat (though the author of Isaiah goes out of his way to reassure us that those lions were no longer carnivorous). Yet the myth always tells us how the people and the animals manage to speak to one another, and how they manage not to attack one another (two closely related problems). It is language, not food, that ultimately separates us from the animals, even in myths.

Sometimes the animals in these myths speak with human tongues; sometimes the people learn to hear what the animals are saying in their animal tongues. It is the second of these fantasies, I think, that is reflected in the animal sculptures that Stella Snead has captured in these photographs. The sculptors may not have been able to speak like animals; but they listened with animal ears, and they saw the animals through animal eyes. It is this that gives these images such an extraordinary intensity of emotion, intelligence, and life. And there is another fantasy that comes into my mind as I look at these vivid stones. Many Indian myths tell of people or animals who are cursed to turn to stone. At the end of their punishment, they will be released by the gaze of an auspicious person. Thus the adulterous Ahalya in the *Ramayana* is cursed, by her husband, to become a stone until the moment when Rama, in exile, will pass through the forest, see the stone, and by his mere gaze restore her to her human form again.[6] These animals seem to have been frozen in the midst of life; and perhaps the auspicious gaze of the reader who looks at them will bring them back to life again. As this happens, the fourth dimension will once again be challenged by Art.

II. Animals in Sculpture

It should be noted from the start that animals are depicted with great luxuriance and variety in Indian sculpture: all sorts of animals are there, and they are everywhere (plate 3). This tells us something about both Indian attitudes to animals and Indian attitudes to sculpture. A word about both of these preoccupations, and in particular about their interaction, may help the reader to appreciate the images in this book.

It will be apparent from what has already been said that animals play a central role in the Indian world view. It must also be noted that religious sculpture, on Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas, plays an equally central role, a role that is far more than merely decorative. The temple is the gateway to the other world, the world of the gods; but it is also a doorway set very firmly indeed in *this* world. It is a celebration of the irrepressible effusion and ebullience of life, on earth as it is in heaven. No detail is too small to be significant in this rich tapestry; every leaf, every tail, is a manifestation of the presence of the gods in our world. And it is this presence that underlies the jubilant atmosphere, the mind-boggling, baroque detail of the carvings on Indian temples and stupas.

Much of what has been written to explain the presence of erotic scenes on Hindu temples could be applied equally well to explain the presence of animals. It should be noted, for instance, that the temple encompasses a series of concentric circles, and that animals appear in different forms on different levels of these circles.[7] Animals appear in particular at the outer levels, on gateways and roofs, and on the outer walls. Many of them—the animals in nature, and the animals in the human world—represent this world, the world of phenomenal forms, of the maelstrom of rebirth; and the temple, the gateway between the worlds, simultaneously celebrates and renounces this world. It celebrates it by thanking the gods for it, and by asking the gods to continue to sustain it; so, too, it celebrates the art, the ability to depict living forms in stone, that is the gift of the gods. But at the same time it renounces this world by asking the worshipers to abandon it, to leave it behind them as they progress beyond the outer walls into the still center of the temple, the *sanctum sanctorum.* In that center animals—and art—are most definitely not represented; there, there is nothing but an image—often a stark, aniconic image—of the god who transcends all material forms.

It is in this context, too, that we may best understand the presence of other sorts of animals—animals in the divine world—in Indian temple sculpture. For as we leave behind us the animals of this world, we are lured toward the still center, the world of immaterial forms, through the intermediary realms in which animals appear as the embodied vehicles of the gods. Every Indian god has an animal for his vehicle (*vahana*). This means not only, or not primarily, that the god is literally carried about on such an animal (the elephant-headed Ganesha is awkwardly mounted on a bandycoot or a large rat), but that the animal also "carries" the god in the way that a breeze "carries" per-

fume; the animal is a vehicle for the God as a certain sort of play is sometimes said to be a vehicle for a great actor. The bandycoot shares Ganesha's nimbleness of wit and ability to get past any obstacle, physical or mental, and in this sense is indeed an appropriate vehicle for Ganesha, who has both the wisdom and the path-clearing abilities of the elephant (plate 1). So, too, when the god Shiva has as his conveyance the bull Nandi (plate 2), the composite image of Shiva and the bull indicates that he "rides" the bull in several ways. The bull expresses something of the god's own nature—the virility and power of Shiva as the god of the phallus—while also expressing the god's ambivalent relationship to that nature: as the greatest of all ascetics and yogis, Shiva "rides" his own virility in the sense that he controls, harnesses, and tames it. Corresponding to these animal manifestations of the god Shiva, several of the avatars or incarnations of the god Vishnu are animals: the boar, the fish, the tortoise (plates 117–18, 120–24). The gods are always present in each one of their animal vehicles or avatars, wherever that animal may be; every bull in a sense *is* Shiva, as every fish *is* Vishnu. This may be seen as a more particularized expression of the basic Hindu philosophy that the ultimate principle of reality (*brahman*) is present within the soul of every living creature (*atman*).

The role of the temple as a gateway between the two worlds serves further to explain the omnipresence of composite fantastic beasts. Hybrid beings represent fine intermediate steps between the material world and the other world, infinite permutations of the degrees to which all of us are simultaneously merely human and not merely human. Finally, though I have said that animals are not *merely* decorative, it is also probably wise to bear in mind the fact that they are certainly *also* highly decorative; and fantastic animals (as well as many naturalistic animals) are often depicted in wildly imaginative and often humorous ways, clearly intended to amuse and to delight. For even God, in the Indian view, indulges in art for art's sake (*lila*).

III. Animals in Nature

Given the way that animals flicker back and forth between the sacred and the profane, it is often difficult to tell when one is looking at a common or garden variety animal (plate 15) or a god in the form of an animal. At the realistic end of the spectrum, Indian sculpture depicts many animals—starfish, rat, mongoose, anteater, squirrel, hyena,

bear, lizard—in a purely naturalistic way (plates 25, 60–65, 158). At the other end of the spectrum are animals that are obviously mythical, either because they have features that are not found in nature or because they occur in mythological contexts. But often it is not easy to tell if the animal that one is looking at through human eyes is looking back with the eyes of an animal or the eyes of a god. It is also sometimes hard, as we shall see, to distinguish animals in the wild from domesticated animals who happen to be depicted in a natural environment; but Indians do make such distinctions between wild and tame in their own theoretical writings about animals.

We will encounter here first animals that seem to be natural and then animals that seem to be supernatural versions of the first set, and we will encounter first animals in nature and then animals in culture. But because of the multivalence of all symbols, including animal symbols, we will find that a single animal may have different meanings in different contexts; for this reason, I have treated certain animals several times, in each of the worlds in which they appear.

DEER AND MONKEYS

The word for deer, *mriga,* also stands for any wild animal. But just as "deer" in English comes from the German *Tier,* meaning any wild animal, so too in Sanskrit the paradigmatic *mriga,* the wild animal par excellence, is the deer (plates 16–17).[8] Monkeys are known in Sanskrit as *mriga*s of the trees—deer of the trees, or wild animals of the trees—an indication that they are, like deer, a defining category of wildness: monkeys are us in the wild. The ingenious (and sometimes sinister) mischievousness of the monkey is brilliantly and minutely observed in Indian sculpture and cunningly recorded in Indian folklore (plate 18–24, 66–67).

AQUATIC ANIMALS

Since water is regarded in India, as in many cultures, as the primordial substance of chaos out of which all life emerges, and since India is a land rich in rivers, it is not surprising that aquatic animals play an important role in Indian sculpture from the very

earliest period (plate 25). Fish, in particular, provide a metaphor for nature in opposition to culture, more precisely, for anarchy in opposition to civilization: the Indian term for anarchy is "the way of the fishes" (*matsya-nyaya*), the big fish eating the little fish, a rough equivalent of our "dog eat dog" (plate 26). Fish are also a symbol of visual beauty and sight: lively women are said to have "fish eyes," eyes shaped like fish. It is in this erotic context that we may perhaps understand the peculiar image of the ascetic riding on a fish (plate 119).

BIRDS

Birds are a dominant theme in Indian sculpture (plate 33). Aquatic birds, in particular, are depicted in their liminal elements. Birds in general are liminal, too, in their symbolism: the royal goose (*hamsa*) is a symbol of the transmigrating soul that transcends the body, and of the discriminating mind, as geese are said to be able to separate milk from water (plates 29, 31, 32, 35). But birds also symbolize the carnal emotions of the body itself: parrots are the pets of courtesans (plate 34), and peacocks and many lovebirds are depicted in Sanskrit poetry as passionately amorous (plates 27, 28, 30). Specifically, their mating calls are powerful expressions of the theme of love in separation (*viraha*).

BULLS AND STALLIONS

Bulls were already prominent in the civilization of the Indus Valley (c. 2000 B.C.), long before the arrival of the invading Indo-Europeans (plates 36–37). But cattle were also highly valued in the *Rig Veda*, as in all ancient Indo-European civilizations. The distinctive breeds of Indian cattle—the bulls with their stunning humps, the cows with their dark, doe eyes—are, like Indian culture itself, a result of this special mixed heritage (plates 4, 13). Horses, like cows and bulls, are in a certain sense no longer ever found "in nature"; they are domesticated, a breed that man has changed. Yet not only do wild horses exist (even if only as fugitives from some once domesticated herd), but the horse in harness remains a powerful image of the persistence of wildness, of all that can never be entirely tamed (plate 38).

ELEPHANTS

The Indian elephant represents royalty, power, wisdom, fertility, longevity, and much else (plates 5, 39–44, 46). Battles between elephants and lions are a favorite theme of sculpture and poetry; generally, the lion is victorious (plate 45). Male elephants in rut are a metaphor for power (not only sexual) raging out of control, an obviously masculine symbol (plate 47). On the other hand, the ideal woman is said to have breasts like the swelling frontal lobes of elephants and to walk with the gait of a female elephant. Thus the elephant in its natural state functions as a symbol of both male and female power.

CATS, LITTLE AND GREAT

Small cats play only a small role in Indian art and folklore; Shasthi, "the Sixth," the goddess of childbirth (so named because she presides over the first six days, the critical days, of the newborn infant's life) rides on a cat. But cats are well-known symbols of hypocrisy: the story is told of a cat who pretended to be an ascetic, standing in a yogic posture all day outside the cave in which a family of mice lived. The mice trusted the cat, thinking that an ascetic must be a vegetarian. But as the days went by, and as the numbers of the mice dwindled steadily, the mice realized that the cat was a false yogi (plate 48).[9]

Big cats, however, are very important in India. Lions are, like their arch-enemies the elephants, royal animals. At first, the paradigmatic big cats were lions; but as lions became relatively scarce in India (now they exist primarily in the protected Gir Forest), tigers came to replace them in iconography, and they were represented with diminishing accuracy (plates 49–59). In contrast, the uncanny cruelty of the tiger is well observed in Indian art and is reflected in the personalities of several Hindu gods (plate 58).

IV. Animals in the Human World

The relationship between people and animals in general is discussed in a number of ancient myths in India (plates 8, 11). The Brahmanas, composed about 900 B.C., state

that when Prajapati, the Creator, tried to commit incest with his daughter, she became a female wild animal (*mrigi*) and he became a male wild animal (*mriga*).[10] A century later, the Upanishads expanded upon this theme, making a significant change: the protagonists are now no longer wild animals, but domestic animals, *pashu*s, the opposite of *mriga*s:

> In the beginning, this universe was Soul in the form of Man. He looked around and saw nothing other than himself. . . . He caused himself to fall into two pieces, and from him a husband and a wife were born. . . . He united with her, and from this mankind was born. She reflected, "How can he unite with me after engendering me from himself? For shame! I will conceal myself." She became a cow; he became a bull and united with her, and from this all the cattle were born. She became a mare; he became a stallion. She became a female ass; he became a male ass and united with her, and from this all whole-hooved animals were born. She became a she-goat; he became a billy-goat; she became a ewe; he became a ram and united with her, and from this goats and sheep were born. Thus he created all the pairs, even down to the ants.[11]

There is a fine symmetry to this list, in the context of Indian attitudes to categories of animals. At the two ends of the spectrum are humans and "ants and everything," the two animal categories that frame the rank-and-file mammals. Those mammals include the five classes of domestic animals known as *pashu*s, a word cognate with the Latin *pecus,* cattle (as in Pecos Bill or "impecunious," having no cattle, or no money). The five *pashu*s are usually enumerated as cow, horse, ass, goat, and sheep, and are often divided into three groups: bovines, equines (horse and ass), and extended ovines (sheep and goat). From our standpoint, humans and "ants and everything else" are equally remote from this central group, but in the Indian view the humans, at least, are a part of it. Some ancient texts state that the five kinds of *pashu*s—and the context indicates that what is meant is domestic animals suitable for sacrifice—are humans, cows and bulls, horses, goats, and sheep.[12] The great Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata,* puts the finishing touches on the scheme by saying that there are seven wild *pashu*s (lion, tiger, boar, monkey, bear, elephant, and buffalo), and seven domestic *pashu*s (the usual five—cow, sheep, man, ram, and horse—plus the donkey and the mule, both variants of the horse).[13] This is not to say that human beings were sacrificed in ancient India; though there is good evidence for this, it is still much debated. It *is* to say, however, that human beings are, like

all other animals, fit to be sacrificed to the gods; that they are, as it were, the livestock of the gods.[14] What animals are to us, we are to the gods. *Mriga,* related to the verb "to hunt" (*margayati,* also connected with the noun *marga,* a trail or path), designates any animal that we hunt, in particular a deer. Of course, wild animals may be hunters themselves, as well as hunted; lions and leopards are such animals (plates 96–97). *Pashus*, by contrast, are the animals that can be sacrificed, whatever their origins. The ancient Indians thus defined animals according to the manner in which they killed them, either in a hunt or in a sacrifice.

Another list that expresses a deep philosophical assumption about the unity of humans and animals is the list of rebirths. It is a fundamental tenet of both Hinduism and Buddhism that people are reborn after death, and these rebirths are often described in Indian texts.[15] One such text tells of several people who remember their past lives: one begins as a monk and then becomes, in sequence, a lay person, a Brahmin, a prince, a king, a celestial woman, a doe, a clinging vine, a bee, an elephant, a bee again, a goose, a swan, and, finally, a god; another becomes a deer, a goose, a tree, a lion, a fish, a monkey, a prince, a crow, an elephant, a donkey, a dog, a bird, a fig tree, a termite, a rooster, a Brahmin, a partridge, a horse, a Brahmin again, a worm, a fly, a crane, a birch tree, an ant, a scorpion, a tribal hunter, and a bee; while his brother becomes a parrot, a frog, a sparrow, a tribal hunter, a tree, a camel, a lovebird, a king, a tiger, a vulture, a crocodile, a lion, a quail, a king, and the son of a teacher named Shaila.[16] These episodes clearly do not distinguish between people and animals—or, indeed, between people and vegetables. The rebirths take place because each individual in the chain dreams of becoming the next one in the chain; the vine is curious about the bees that buzz among her blossoms, and, as the text assures us, "Animals dream, too."

DEER

Deer are, as we have seen, the defining wild animals, or *mrigas*, in part because they are the most important animal that one hunts (plates 68, 71, 72). It is the deer that transfers man from civilization to wilderness: in many myths, a deer lures the hunter (usually a king) farther and farther, deep into the woods, until he is lost. In the *Ramayana,* the demon Ravana has his ally take the form of a beautiful deer to lure Rama away

from his hermitage so that Ravana can abduct Rama's wife, Sita (plate 70).[17] And in secular Indian sculpture and painting, the deer is the companion of the heroine, whose eyes should, ideally, be like the eyes of a frightened doe (plate 69).

COWS AND BULLS, HORSES AND MARES

The cow in Indian civilization is symbolic of motherhood, nourishment, chastity, and noninjury (the cow being an animal able to furnish food without having to be slaughtered). Cows cannot be killed in India, but they are not sacred, not the objects of any cult; indeed, they are one of the very few animals in India that are *not* sacred (plates 73–75).

The stallion functions in ancient India, as throughout the ancient Indo-European world, as a symbol of royal, martial, and virile power (plates 7, 76–78, 81–82, 84, 86). The riding of the horse (more precisely, of the voracious mare) became a metaphor for the taming of sexuality and other dangerous emotions (plates 79, 80, 83, 85).[18] The stallion remains an important figure on the local, village level, despite the fact that few horses play any actual role in village life, being primarily aristocratic animals (in part because horses do not thrive in India and must be constantly imported, at great expense; camels are far better adapted to the Indian climate [plates 94, 95]). Yet one still encounters in villages many equine deities and equestrian heroes, as well as charming terracotta horses, some of enormous size. Clearly in these instances, the horse is no longer a real animal at all, but merely a mythical beast.

DOGS AND ELEPHANTS

At the bottom of the Indian spectrum of animal life is the dog, symbolic of all that the caste system reviles and devalues. Though respected as a companion in hunting (plate 87), the dog is regarded as unclean, promiscuous both in his eating habits and in his (more often her) sexual habits. In the oldest Indian texts, long-tongued dogs are said to lick up (hence both to steal and to defile) the sacrificial offerings.[19] Later, dogs are said to be the food of Untouchables (who are called Dog-cookers, Shvapakas, in Sanskrit). Yet dogs are depicted sympathetically in Indian sculpture (plate 88).

At the other end of the spectrum of auspiciousness and status are elephants, the

limousines of great kings and the tank force of the army (plates 89–90, 92–93). Yet elephants, too, have their shadow side in the uses to which humans put them; certain sorts of criminals were punished by being trampled to death by elephants (plate 91).

V. Animals in the Divine World

In addition to the many individual animals of mythological significance, Indian mythology teems with animals of a more miscellaneous sort (plate 98). We have seen that every Indian god has an animal for his vehicle (*vahana*). Other animals attain different importance in Indian sculpture, for though all animals can be mythical beasts, certain animals tend to be more mythical than others, more archetypal, if you will. Mythological bestiaries vary greatly, in part simply because certain numinous animals live in some places and not in others; the animals that star in Indian sculpture are animals of the jungle and the desert.

SNAKES AND BIRDS

Snakes and birds recur throughout the art and the mythology of the world, both individually and as a matched pair. Snakes slough their skin to become symbols of rebirth, or bite their tales to become symbols of infinity (*ouroboros*es); they bring about the loss of innocence, as in Genesis, or the loss of immortality, as in the *Gilgamesh Epic* (see plates 99–100). Birds (and eggs, which snakes have, too) are symbols of creation; their wings make them part of the kingdom of heaven, where they come to function as symbols of God (in Christianity) or of the magic woman from the other world (the Swan Maiden in Indo-European folklore). Together, snakes and birds may be used to symbolize the elements of air and subterranean water, spirit and matter, good and evil, or simply the principle of opposition, through the observed natural enmity of the two species.

Much of the universal symbolism of snakes and birds is found in Indian mythology, together with the more narrowly Indo-European themes of the killing of the dragon-serpent Python and the battle between birds and snakes. Thus, in the Vedas, Indra, the king of the gods and the god of rain, who takes the form of an eagle or rides on an eagle,

kills the serpent Vrtra.[20] And in the opening books of the *Mahabharata,* the quarrel between Vinata, the mother of snakes, and Suparna, the mother of birds (specifically eagles), leads to the great snake sacrifice.[21]

It is hardly surprising that in a country as snaky as India, snake symbolism is particularly lush. The Nagas (and their beautiful wives, the Naginis) are ophidian demigods, half serpent (usually cobra) and half deity, the Indian counterpart of the mermaid and merman (plates 105, 108). They inhabit the waters of the lower world, participate in many myths, and adorn most temples. The god Vishnu sleeps on the serpent of eternity, called Ananta ("Eternity") or Shesha ("The Remainder") (plates 101, 103). But in his avatar as Krishna, Vishnu dances on the hoods of the cobra Kaliya.[22] Shiva, the god of yogis and of the phallic *lingam* (plates 109–10) wears snakes for his bracelets, necklaces, sacred thread, and (with occasionally embarrassing results) belt (plates 102, 104).[23] And Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Shiva, is sometimes snake-draped in imitation of his father (plate 107).

Birds of a rich mythological plumage are equally pervasive. Vishnu rides on the mythical Garuda bird, but in his Krishna avatar he kills a demon who takes the form of a crane (plate 116). Skanda (also called Kartikkeya), the general of the gods, rides most appropriately on a peacock (plates 111–13); and Brahma, the Creator (descendant of the incestuous Prajapati), rides on a royal goose or swan, the *hamsa* (plate 114). Parrots, the traditional companions of courtesans in the human world, are associated with the goddess Rati, the incarnation of sexual pleasure (plate 115).

AQUATIC ANIMALS

Snakes in India are part of the symbolism of water and of the underworld. Other aquatic animals, too, play an important role in Indian mythology and art. Hinduism shares with Christianity the image of the ever-expanding divine fish; the image of the fish eating the fish, *ad infinitum,* together with its variant,the fish biting its tail, is a form of the *ouroboros,* the snake biting its own tail, a symbol of infinity (plate 12). In Hindu mythology, Vishnu becomes a fish, and Man (called Manu) fishes him out of the water—not to kill him, but at the request of the god-fish, who is so little that he is in danger of being eaten by all the bigger fish. As the fish grows bigger and bigger, Manu puts him in bigger and bigger vessels, finally setting him free in the ocean (where he is now big

enough to eat all the other fish); and when the great flood arises, the god-fish fishes Manu out of the water and saves him, hooking him on a kind of horn that he is said to possess (plate 117).[24]

Vishnu also becomes incarnate as a turtle or tortoise, whose upper and lower shells are the top bowl and the bottom bowl of the universe (plate 118). When the gods and demons joined forces to churn the ocean of milk in order to obtain the elixir of immortality, the great serpent Vasuki served as the churning rope (plate 106), the axial mountain Mandara served as the churn, and Vishnu took the form of a tortoise to support the churning mountain. Varuna, god of the waters, particularly the oceans, rides on a crocodile or sea monster, called a *makara* (plate 157).

BOARS

The boar is regarded as an aquatic animal in Indian mythology, and as such is assimilated to Vishnu's other aquatic avatars (the fish and the tortoise). Vishnu becomes the cosmic boar in order to create the earth, diving down into the cosmic ocean to bring up the dirt that is then spread on the surface of the waters to make the world (plates 123–24). It is also said that when the earth was stolen by a demon and carried to the bottom of the ocean, or when she sank down of her own weight, Vishnu rescued her; often the earth is depicted as an anthropomorphic goddess, sitting on the lap of the boar-headed Vishnu (plates 120–22). Later, when Vishnu and Brahma confront the pillar of fire that is the manifestation of Shiva's phallus, Vishnu again becomes the boar to plunge down into the ocean to seek, in vain, the bottom of the pillar.

MONKEYS

The most famous monkey in Indian mythology is Hanuman, the monkey who helped Rama find his wife, Sita, when she had been abducted to Lanka by the demon Ravana (plates 125–27). The monkeys in the *Ramayana* supply a mirror for the human heroes; the monkeys, like the humans, experience a battle for the throne, but the battle in the monkey kingdom is resolved by an ugly fratricide that functions as a sinister shadow for the idealized conflict between Rama and his brothers. Hanuman, the son of the god of wind, leaps across the ocean from India to Lanka to find Sita and reas-

sures her that Rama is coming to her; as he leaves Lanka, he sets fire to the city with his tail. In later Indian mythology, many folk traditions expanded upon the story of Hanuman, telling of mysterious encounters between the monkey and the demon Ravana in an underworld that further mirrors the shadow world of the monkey kingdom itself.

DOGS

The very fact that conventional Indian society regarded dogs as polluted and polluting scavengers made them, in less conventional or unconventional devotional sects, the symbol of reversals, of salvation, of the small becoming great, the impure pure. Yudhishthira, the righteous king in the *Mahabharata,* refuses to enter heaven until the gods give him permission to bring in with him the dog that has followed him faithfully through all his trials, a dog who turns out to be none other than the god Dharma himself.[25] And the god Shiva, particularly in his manifestation as the terrible Bhairva, is depicted as an outcaste hunter surrounded by a pack of devoted dogs (plates 128–29).

DEER

Hindu ascetics wear the skin of a deer as an emblem of their distance from human society, their wildness (plates 130–31). In myths, human sages often assume the form of deer to live in the forest and are mistaken for deer by careless hunters, who shoot them by mistake and are cursed as a result. This theme is at the causal heart of both of the great epics: in the *Ramayana,* Dasharatha, the father of Rama, shoots a young boy whom he mistakes for a wild animal (an elephant) and is therefore cursed to die grieving for his own son; in the *Mahabharata,* Pandu, the father of the five Pandavas, the heroes of the epic, shoots an ascetic sage who has taken the form of a deer to make love to his wife (also in the form of a deer), and so Pandu is cursed to die if he makes love to his own wife.[26]

Shiva, the god of ascetics, is often depicted in sculpture with a deer emerging from one of his many hands. Moreover, deer are a central religious image in Buddhism. The Buddha first preached in a deer park, symbolic of the withdrawal from involvement in human society, for the philosophy of Buddhism stemmed, at least in part, from a revulsion against the evils of civilization (more precisely, urbanization).[27] In this context, the

deer in the Buddhist park represent the innocence and purity of the wilderness, to which the renunciant returns (plate 132).

BULLS AND COWS, HORSES AND MARES

The protean god Indra in the *Rig Veda* is said to be a bull and to ride on a bull; as the storm god, he is the bull whose semen falls to the earth as rain and fertilizes the earth-cow. In later mythology, the god Shiva (who inherits much of Indra's mythology) rides on the gentle bull Nandi; images of Nandi stand in the temples of Shiva, and women who wish to have children touch the testicles of the little bull (plates 134–38).[28] The magic wishing-cow grants to the milker whatever he wishes for as he milks her; the earth herself is a cow who is "milked" of her plants. The cows that surround the infant Krishna are his surrogate mothers, like the cowherd women who nurse him (plate 133).

The chariot of Surya, the sun, is pulled by stallions, and the sun himself is represented as a white stallion (plates 139–41). This divine solar mythology is counterbalanced by the dark, demonic mythology of the submarine mare: the wife of the sun takes the form of a shadow mare who abandons him and her children; and, in later Hindu mythology, the doomsday fire takes the form of a mare who is held in check by the waters of the ocean, until the moment when she will emerge to destroy the universe.

RAMS AND BUFFALOES

In Vedic India, male goats and rams were the sacrificial animals par excellence. Agni, the god of fire, was depicted as a ram, or as riding on a ram, because Agni was the paradigmatic sacrificial priest and messenger of the gods; all offerings into fire (*agni*) were carried to the gods (plates 142–43). When the virile god Indra was castrated (by the curse of Gautama, whose wife, Ahalya, Indra had seduced), he was restored by being given the testicles of a ram.[29]

In later Hinduism, the paradigmatic myth of sacrifice is the myth of the slaying of the buffalo demon, Mahisha, by the goddess Durga. Mahisha fell in love with the goddess and wanted to marry her; luring him on, she attacked him and killed him. As her lion mauled to death his theriomorphic form, and the goddess herself cut off his head,

the anthropomorphic form of the demon emerged from the severed neck, to be slaughtered by the goddess in a love-death (plates 144–46).

ELEPHANTS

The elephant on which the god Indra rides is appropriate to him in at least three ways: in his role as king of the gods, the elephant being the royal mount; as god of warriors, the elephant being the superweapon of the ancient world; and as god of rain, the great grey elephant being the monsoon cloud (plates 148, 151). The mother of the future Buddha dreamt, upon conceiving him, that a white elephant had entered her womb (plate 149); later, when the Bodhisattva's wicked cousin, Devadatta, tried to kill him by sending a wild elephant against him, the Bodhisattva subdued the elephant, taming the evil powers that it symbolized (plate 147). The god Shiva, too, fought with an elephant demon, slew him, flayed him, and wore the still bloody skin as a shawl; the god Vishnu, by contrast, set free a trapped elephant. Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune, is lustrated by two elephants; elephants support the earth and the quarters of the sky. The god Ganesha, patron of scribes and of all enterprises, was beheaded by his father, Shiva, shortly after his birth; at the request of his distraught mother, Ganesha was given a new head, which happened to be the head of an elephant. This head is the source of Ganesha's cunning and of his ability to remove (or impose) obstacles (plates 150, 152–53).

LIONS

In the *Rig Veda*, Vishnu is described as lurking in the mountains in the form of a ferocious wild beast, which the commentator identifies as a lion.[30] Indeed, one of Vishnu's last incarnations is as the man-lion, Narasimha, who disembowels an evil demon (plates 155–56). Shiva is said to be called by the euphemism *shiva* ("auspicious") as an inversion of *vashi* ("controller"), since he controls everyone and no one controls him, just as the lion (*simha*) is so named as an inversion of the word for injury (*himsa*), because the lion kills all animals but cannot be killed by any of them.[31] The most notorious Hindu lion of all is the mount of the bloodthirsty goddess Durga. Thus each of the three major Hindu gods is associated with a lion, a wild animal, and each of them dominates a bovine, the paradigmatic domesticated animal: Vishnu (as Krishna) herds cows,

Shiva rides on the bull Nandi, and the goddess kills the buffalo Mahisha. The feral god with the bovine servant (or worshiper) is the Hindu equivalent of the Christian image of the lion with the lamb. The lion as royal symbol rises to the sacred level in Buddhism, as well, where lions support the throne (called the "lion seat") of the meditating Buddha (plate 154).

VI. Fantastic Animals

It will, I hope, be evident by now that all animals in India are mythical beasts in at least one sense of the word: they "reek of meaning."[32] But there are also beasts that are truly mythical. A recent publication discusses an extraordinary array of mythical animals depicted in Indian art, dividing them, like the Indian cosmos, into three groups.[33] First come the aerial mythical animals: winged lions (plates 160, 162–63), griffins, winged deer, winged horses, winged elephants, creatures half-man half-bird, winged bulls with elephant faces, winged otters, winged goats, lion-faced cocks, men and women with a lion's body and wings, eagles with five-hooded Nagas, and women with the bodies of birds and with birds' wings. Then come the terrestrial mythical beasts: human-faced lions, horned lions, beaked lions, elephant-faced bulls with antlers, animals half-man half-horse, elephant-faced men, goat-faced men, bear-faced men, beaked otters, beasts half-maiden half-snake or half-man half-snake (Naginis and Nagas), and double-headed lions (plate 161). Any of these forms, and more besides, may be assumed by the animals generally known as *vyala*s, or "monsters with gaping jaws," though pseudo-leonine forms seem to prevail (plates 6, 10, 165–73).

Finally, there are the aquatic animals: weird aquatic birds (plate 177); elephants with fish tails (plate 164); ichthyocentaurs; hippocamps; horses with fish tails; winged dragons; stags with fish tails; water bulls; goats with human faces and fish tails; goats with fish tails and lions' paws; wolves, deer, cats, beaked horses, boars, buffalo, lions, beaked lions, winged lions, dogs, monkeys—all with the tails of fish—ducks and swans and rams with fish tails and lions' paws; crocodiles with scorpion tails; lions and *makara*s, some with crocodile forequarters and a fish tail (plates 175–77). The *makara* may sometimes be a plain ordinary crocodile, but is often more dragonish (frequently translated as "sea serpent"). *Makara*s may be the vehicles or symbols of the god of the waters, Varuna, or of the two great river goddesses, the Ganges and the Yamuna; and

they are often depicted on lintels or on either side of the door to a temple as auspicious guardians (plate 9).

In contemplating this rich array of fantastic forms, the mind boggles. The composite fantastic animals may be "composite" in several senses (plate 178). They are a combination of natural and supernatural, of animal and divine; and to the extent that they represent projections of human emotions and fantasies, they are a combination of human and animal. They are, like the many-headed and many-handed Hindu gods, many-faceted, multivalent (like religious symbols), or overdetermined (like Freudian symbols), representative of many things at once. And, in art, they may be visually composite: Kama, the god of erotic love, is often depicted riding on an elephant (or a mare) composed of the hotly intertwined bodies of women, or of lovers, or of various animals; or an animal may be simultaneously an elephant and a bull (plate 179), depending on one's point of view, like the duck-rabbit of Gestalt psychology.

Even gods who have real animal forms may take fantastic animal forms. The god Shiva makes war upon Vishnu's boar avatar (when the boar rages out of control) by taking the form of a *sharabha,* a beast variously described, but often said to have eight legs, eight tusks, a mane, and a long tail. If you were to meet such an animal, you would know that supernatural forces were at play. But what if you merely met a monkey or a bull? In India, you could be just as sure that you were in the presence of the gods.

Notes

1. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 10.28.

2. *Chandogya Upanishad* 5.3–10 and *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* 6.2.9–15.

3. *Jaiminiya Brahmana* (Nagpur, 1954), 1.42–44. See Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Tales of Sex and Violence: Folklore, Sacrifice, and Danger in the Jaiminiya Brahmana* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 32–49.

4. Isaiah 11.6–8.

5. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 19–35.

6. Valmiki, *Ramayana* (Baroda, 1960–75), 1.44–48.

7. For an analysis of these concentric circles, see pages 37–39 of the introduction (by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty) to *Elephanta: The Cave of Shiva,* photographs by Carmel Berkson (Princeton, 1983).

8. Shakespeare used the phrase "small deer" (in *King Lear* 3.4.144, and elsewhere) in the sense of its original meaning from the German.

9. *Tantropakhyana,* text and translation by George T. Artola in the *Adyar Library Bulletin* 29 (1965): 1–4, tale 1.

10. *Aitareya Brahmana* 3.33–34; translated in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 29–31.

11. *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* 1.4.1–6; translated in O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths,* pp. 34–35.

12. *Atharva Veda* 11.2.9, with Sayana's commentary; see also *Atharva Veda* 3.10.6, with Sayana's commentary. For a further discussion of these categories, see Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, "The Case of the Stallion's Wife: Indra and Vrsanasva in the *Rg Veda* and the *Brahmanas,*" in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105 (1985): 485–98.

13. *Mahabharata* 6.5.12–14.

14. For the concept of men as the sacrificial beasts of the gods, see O'Flaherty, *The Origins of Evil,* pp. 169–73 and *Other Peoples' Myths* (New York, 1988), pp. 82–89.

15. See Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions* (Berkeley, 1980).

16. See the story of Jivata, in the *Yogavasistha* 6.1.62–69, and the story of Punya and Pavana, *Yogavasistha* 5.2.9–30, cited by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusion, and Other Realities* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 206–7, 209–10.

17. *Ramayana* 3.40–41.

18. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 149–239.

19. See, for example, the story of Long-tongue the Demonness, in the *Jaiminiya Brahmana* 1.161–163, in connection with other stories of dogs at sacrifices; O'Flaherty, *Tales of Sex and Violence,* pp. 97–103.

20. *Rig Veda* 1.32; see Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *The Rig Veda* (Harmondsworth, 1980), pp. 148–51.

21. *Mahabharata* 1.18–34.

22. *Bhagavata Purana* 10.15–17; O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths,* pp. 221–28.

23. See Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva* (Oxford, 1973).

24. *Shatapatha Brahmana* 1.8.1.1–6; *Matysa Purana* 1.11–34, 2.1–19; O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths,* pp. 179–84.

25. *Mahabharata* 18 (*Svargarohana Parvan*).

26. *Ramayana* 2.58; *Mahabharata* 1.109.

27. Walter A. Fairservis, *The Roots of Ancient India* (London, 1971), pp. 378–81.

28. See O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes,* pp. 241–54.

29. *Ramayana* 1.47–48; O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism,* pp. 85–86.

30. *Rig Veda* 1.154.2; O'Flaherty, *The Rig Veda,* p. 226.

31. *Shiva Purana* (Benares, 1964), 1.1.18.75–76.

32. This phrase was used by Clifford Geertz to describe religious symbolism in *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-century Bali* (Princeton, 1980).

33. K. Krishna Murthy, *Mythical Animals in Indian Art* (New Delhi, 1985).

Plate 3. Birds, animals, and figures.
Gateway, sandstone.
Stupa 1, Sanchi, Central India. Satavahana period, first century

THE SCULPTURES

The Architectural Setting

The majority of the sculptures illustrated in this volume are closely connected with the sacred architecture of India's great religions. Buddhist stupas and Hindu and Jaina sanctuaries have been erected in brick and stone over more than two thousand years. These monuments are richly adorned with carvings in which animals play a prominent part as companions to the principal images employed in worship or as objects of devotion themselves. Animals also form part of the repertory of motifs with which architectural elements are decorated: the significance of such themes is revealed by their actual location on the building.

Above all, animals help to protect the sacred monument. Together with an ever-present vegetal ornament, animal sculptures assert the forces of nature in the works of man. Only by constantly representing such natural motifs, it seems, can the stupa, shrine, or temple function satisfactorily. Since these are the temporary abodes of the gods on earth, the sites where humans may make formal contact with the divine, these buildings are of immense sanctity. But sacred monuments are also vulnerable; they need to be constantly shielded from negative forces. For this reason, shrines are often provided with images of powerful guardian figures bearing weapons. Animals play a similar protective role.

Perhaps the most critical part of any Indian shrine is the entrance. Here is delimited the sacred zone, the meeting place of the world of humans and the world of gods. Gateways, doorways, and other openings are often adorned with animal motifs. These are sculptured onto the timberlike posts and architraves of gateways of Buddhist stupas; they ornament the jambs and arched lintels of doorways. Indeed, animals are concentrated in any open portion of the building, especially colonnades, unenclosed columned halls and verandas. Animals are carved onto column shafts as well as onto brackets, the junctions of horizontal and vertical members; ceilings are also enlivened with animal motifs. In all of these instances, the animals cannot be divorced from the architectural elements on which they appear. Whether on gateway posts, column shafts, or cantilevered brackets, animals form an integral part of the building fabric. There is no essential distinction between architecture and sculpture.

Even the outer walls of the monument display animal motifs. The basement, the support of the temple, is usually the vehicle for long friezes in which animal motifs predominate, often in combination with narrative episodes or traditional scenes. The walls are rhythmically divided into recesses and projections in order to display images of other divinities and mythological figures. Animals appear here, in panels or on continuous friezes at the base or top of the walls. Above, parapet elements are carried into various layers of the towers that rise over the sanctuaries. Animals demarcate the different stories, projecting as brackets or serving even as finial pieces. In all of these locations, animals are incorporated into the overall sculptural programs of the building exterior; they form part of the designs of basements, pilastered facades, and pyramidal superstructures.

Animals are also the object of worship or indicators of major cult deities, since they serve as mounts for particular gods and goddesses. Such animals are sometimes housed in sanctuaries, wall niches, or even in separate pavilions. Divinities with animal heads or bodies are common; these hybrid figures are found in the presence of other gods and goddesses. Fantastic animals are singled out for particular attention since they are considered unusually powerful. In an enlarged form, fantastic animals dominate architectural features, especially on columns, where they are sometimes carved completely in the round to leap outward from the building into the world of humans.

Harappa Culture: Second Millennium B.C.

Indian sculptures of animals and birds are older than history. Dating back to the second millennium B.C., artifacts from the Harappa culture of the Indus River valley include vivid and surprisingly naturalistic depictions of fauna. These appear as details of finely worked steatite seals that display emblematic motifs and an intriguing script, still to be satisfactorily deciphered. There are also miniature terracotta sculptures, fully modeled in the round, that may have served as toys or ritual objects. Such seals and terracottas have been found in abundance in the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, now in Pakistan. While the meanings that such objects may have had for the Harappan people remain elusive, there are striking resemblances to animals that appear in the later arts of Buddhism and Hinduism. This suggests the possibility of cultural and religious continuities extending back into the shadows of prehistory.

Among the fauna depicted on seals are the starfish, with its six tentacles symmetrically disposed in rotational movement (plate 25); the bull, with stylized body markings and an enlarged ribbed horn, standing before an unidentified ritual object (plate 37); and the tiger, with clearly engraved body stripes, turning its head backward to gaze at a tree (plate 58). Among the terracotta sculptures are the tiny bull, modeled with a fullness suggesting the bulk of the animal itself (plate 36); and the damaged image of an anteater, its arched body covered with spots rendered in appliqué relief (plate 62).

Maurya Period: Third Century B.C.

After the disintegration of the Harappa culture, in the middle of the first millennium B.C., there is a great gap in Indian sculpture. While archaeological investigations and studies of epic Sanskrit literature have traced waves of Aryan invaders that swept into India from the northwest, beginning about 2,000 B.C., the material discoveries are mostly confined to pottery fragments. Here there are no animals, nor indeed any figures at all. Such a total absence of the representational arts continues until the third century B.C. Then, with a suddenness that has yet to be fully explained, a completely evolved sculptural tradition appears in carved stone. This monumental art coincides with the emergence of the Maurya dynasty as the dominant power in central and eastern India. A

series of columns dating from this era display the edicts of the emperor Ashoka (ca. 272—231 B.C.), proclaiming his support of Buddhism. These columns were erected at most of the sites in eastern India connected with the life of the Buddha; other columns at more remote locations assert the imperial claims of the Maurya ruler. The columns are distinguished by their unadorned circular shafts and delicately modeled capitals surmounted by enlarged animals, all in finely polished sandstone. These animals are monumentally conceived as obvious emblems of royalty; their superbly rendered forms are among the most powerful in Indian art.

The capital from Rampurva is fashioned as a standing bull, staring ahead patiently (plate 4). Curved planes, swelling outward as if imbued with an inner breath, convey the strength and bulk of the animal. The quartet of lion torsoes that adorns the capital from Sarnath is among the most celebrated of all Indian sculptures. The imperial might of this Maurya-period lion motif is communicated with startling immediacy over more than two thousand years; today this capital serves as the emblem of modern India. The circular abacus beneath the animals has solar disks, additional motifs of royalty, as well as relief sculptures of the bull, horse, lion, and elephant. The horse is shown surging forward in a joyful gallop, its tail flying up behind (plate 38); the elephant walks majestically (plate 40). Similar abacus reliefs, such as the pair of pecking geese, are found on another of these Maurya-period columns, that at Sanchi (plate 32).

Sculptural fragments from this era include a monkey head (plate 18) and a terracotta mongoose with its head and tail raised up (plate 61). The naturalism of these miniature pieces, especially the monkey head, is unmistakable. Both were discovered at Patna, once Patilaputra, the capital of the Mauryas. Also connected with these rulers are the rock-cut sanctuaries at Barabar, evidently intended as retreats for Jaina monks. The doorway to the Lomas Rishi cave imitates the elevation of a hut structure with a curved eave and pot finial. Within the architrave is a procession of elephants (plate 147). The animals stride resolutely toward the funerary stupas.

Shunga Period: Second Century B.C.

From the Maurya era onward, free-standing monuments connected with both Buddhist and Jaina sects are preserved in permanent materials. The most important early architectural form is the stupa, the hemispherical funerary mound. Originally intended

to enshrine the relics of a spiritual teacher, the stupa came to embody a religious doctrine; for this reason stupas were erected at sites connected with the life of Buddha and Mahavira, the Founders of Buddhism and Jainism, as well as at other holy spots. Patrons were responsible for the adornment of many Shunga-period stupas in central India. Around these solid monuments were erected stone railings and gateways. These imitated timber models, and were carved with a rich variety of ornamental themes incorporating animals, birds, and flora. The overall character of these sculptures is revealed by their location on the railings and gateways that delimited the sacred zone. As visualizations of natural forces, they provided the stupa with magical protection.

The stupa at Bharhut is celebrated for the profusion of its sculptures, especially those contained within medallions and friezes on the railings, and on the supporting stone posts. These animated compositions, carved in deep red sandstone, depict a large variety of themes drawn from nature and the human world. Episodes from the life of Buddha also appear, but never is Buddha himself actually depicted. There is also a series of Jataka sculptures that are among the earliest narratives in Indian art. The Jatakas are folk tales that were absorbed into Buddhism as stories of the previous births of Buddha.

On one Bharhut medallion is a scene of monkeys playing with an elephant; some ride on the animal's back, others hang onto the tail or climb over the head; there are even monkey musicians beneath (plate 22). In a half-medallion there is an unusual depiction of vicious dogs, one of which sinks its teeth into the back of a boar; a figure holding a club appears to be encouraging the attack (plate 87). Two seated bullocks, unyoked from the cart they have been pulling, are shown in another medallion (plate 73). Episodes from the life of Buddha include the scene in which, reclining on a bed and accompanied by her handmaidens, princess Maya dreams that she will give birth to the future savior who appears above her as a floating elephant (plate 149). A railing detail illustrating Buddha's enlightenment at Bodhgaya shows spotted deer seated peacefully before an empty throne sheltered by a tree (plate 130). Another fragmentary railing piece displays a striding elephant wearing a blanket and carrying a relic basket on its head (plate 89). It probably refers to the distribution of Buddha's ashes among the different kingdoms.

More animated is the medallion depicting the Mahakapi Jataka (plate 66), in which the monkey hero sits in the foreground, while other monkeys in a tree attempt to leap across the river to safety: human figures hold a blanket to catch them in case they fall.

The hero of the Mriga Jataka is a deer wounded by a hunter's arrow (plate 68). In a later episode included within the same circular composition, the deer is rescued and worshiped by a prince.

Other Bharhut compositions are carved directly onto the posts beneath the medallions: a parrot hangs freely while clutching a fruit-laden branch (plate 34); a squirrel nibbles a nut (plate 63). Elsewhere, a group composed of three conjoined lions stands on guard (plate 49). The patterns of the animals' manes and the schematic symmetry of their heads, with their tongues hanging out playfully, give these beasts an almost comic quality. At the base of one column, a ceremonial standard-bearer riding a prancing horse is carved in high relief (plate 78). The animal is richly attired with bridle, decorated saddle, and belt ornaments; the dress of the rider is even more elaborate. At the top of his standard is a birdlike figure, possibly an early representation of Garuda, the mythical eagle.

The other great Shunga-period monument is at Sanchi. Stupa 2 at this site has many of its sandstone posts and railings adorned with sculptures. These vigorously executed compositions are often more ornamental than narrative; there is rarely the precision of detail of Bharhut. A peacock with outspread feathers is schematized into a geometric pattern that almost completely fills one medallion; smaller pea-hens are positioned at either side (plate 28).Other medallions depict a pair of geese, one with the head up, the other with the head down (plate 29); an elephant, its trunk held high, devours lotus flowers (plate 39); and composite beasts with crocodile jaws, or vyala snouts, and fish tails are sinuously worked into the space of a half-medallion (plates 164, 175).

Human figures together with animals appear in other compositions at Sanchi. A horse bearing a rider holding a bow is found in one medallion (plate 76). The stirrups of the horse are of interest, being the earliest illustration of this feature in Indian art, or indeed, in the ancient world in general. Elsewhere, a lion standing up on its hind legs does battle with a hunter armed with a dagger and a decorated shield (plate 96).

Fragmentary remains from other Shunga-period monuments include a railing detail from Sarnath showing a stupa wreathed in a garland of serpents (plate 99). Of particular interest is the eroded frieze from cave 18 at Bhaja, a Buddhist rock-cut site in the Deccan (plate 139). This composition is dominated by a royal figure, sometimes identified as the sun deity Surya, who rides in a chariot with attendant women. The four horses that pull the chariot appear to trample an enlarged demonic figure.

Satavahana Period: First and Second Centuries A.D.

In the centuries following the Shunga era, Indian sculpture achieved a new vitality. Animals in both decorative and narrative compositions adorned newly built or renovated Buddhist monuments. In the first century A.D., the free-standing gateways of stupa 1 at Sanchi were erected (plate 3). These imitated timber practice, with sandstone posts supporting horizontal architraves: sculptural panels and friezes cover almost all the elements. Peacocks adorn the architrave ends (plate 30); gracefully posed, their heads are turned around to face each other, their long feathers trailing to either side. On the columns, ducks inhabit a lotus pond depicted in exuberant detail (plate 31); deer form part of a peaceful forest scene with ascetics seated before a thatch hut (plate 70).

Fully modeled sculptures, usually pairs of animals with courtly riders, serve as capitals on the Sanchi gateways. The carving skillfully conveys both the form and bulk of the animals; garlands, headbands, and cloaks are rendered with care. Pairs of seated deer and camels are back to back, emphasizing the necks and heads (plates 69, 94). In another capital, elephants are shown in continuous procession (plate 90). Similar themes appear in other Satavahana-period monuments in the Deccan. In cave 7 at Bedsa, for instance, two horses seated back to back bear embracing riders (plate 77). The horses are plainly attired but have curiously elongated heads.

Kushana Period: Second and Third Centuries

From the second century A.D. onward, much of northwestern and central India was brought under the control of the invading Kushana rulers. While Buddhist and Jaina sects continued to flourish, this period saw the emergence of the various male and female deities that were to form the core of devotional Hinduism. The Kushanas sponsored art traditions that focused on figural representation of both holy men and divinities. Despite this strong iconographic tradition, Indian sculpture continued to employ animal motifs.

Buddhist themes are illustrated in the art of the northwestern region of Gandhara. Classical conventions that characterize Gandhara art during the Kushana period testify to contacts with the Hellenistic traditions during the second and third centuries A.D. Most examples of Gandhara sculpture are executed in a blueish schist; they are small

compositions, often with a narrative content. One relief illustrates the early life of Buddha (plate 79). While the infant saviour is bathed, his horse is being fed. The posture and limbs of the animal are faithfully recorded. A similarly naturalistic elephant appears in a relief depicting the visit of the god Indra to Buddha, who is shown seated within a cave (plate 148). While the animal is an accessory motif in both these Gandhara narratives, it serves an emblematic purpose: young Buddha rides on the horse and is represented by this animal; similarly, Indra's animal is the elephant.

Kushana art of central India is particularly associated with the Mathura area and its distinctive spotted red sandstone. The energy of the Kushana style is unmistakable in a fragmentary lion torso (plate 50). This sculpture is carved in the round, with an open mouth, protruding eyes, and sharply delineated and carefully arranged hair on its head and back. The intermingling of animal motifs with figural sculpture, a feature of later Hindu art, is seen in the damaged head of Parshvanatha (plate 100). The multiheaded hood of the cobra surrounds the head of this Jaina saint, providing him with magical protection.

Gupta and Post-Gupta Periods: Fifth through Seventh Centuries

Following the Kushana period, there is once again a gap of some centuries in the production of art. Not until the fifth century in central and western India are there any substantial architectural remains with accompanying sculptures. From this period onward, the temple is the dominant form of religious architecture. In its simplest scheme, the temple consists of a small sanctuary enshrining a votive image or emblem of the cult deity. Sculptures representing the deity in one or more aspects are placed in the outer walls. Entrance doorways, often sheltered by porches, as well as basements and cornices, are all adorned with protective motifs that invariably include animal elements.

The sophistication of Indian culture under the Gupta rulers is reflected in the art of the period. It is evident in the range of imagery and the assured technique with which stone and terracotta sculptures are executed, integrating animals into a complex figural imagery. Major sculptural pieces visualize the principal divinities and their attendant consorts, retinues, and guardians. Gupta art rapidly evolves conventions by which deities are depicted riding, seated, or even sleeping on animals and birds. As an extension of this meeting of anthropomorphic and animal forms, hybrid figures develop, mingling

human and animal or bird features. Textbooks (*shastras*) on image-making, the earliest of which can be traced back to the Gupta period, fix the appropriate mount for each deity.

Almost no Gupta-period shrines stand intact.The ruined fifth-century Dashavatara temple at Deogarh in central India preserves only its central sanctuary. The sculptured sandstone panels on three sides are among the masterpieces of the era. One panel illustrates the descent of Vishnu, who, riding on his eagle mount Garuda, rescues the elephant king trapped in a lotus pond by a wicked serpent (plate 98). The deep modeling and subtle postures of these figures create a dramatic composition in which human, animal, and vegetal elements are effectively combined. The elephant is shown with its legs firmly grasped by watery plants. Garuda is part bird and part human; a similar hybrid form is adopted for the repentant serpent, whose human torso is provided with a cobra hood. In the adjacent panel, the head of Vishnu is sheltered by the multiheaded hoods of Shesha, the cosmic serpent (plate 101). The eyes of the god are gently closed in undisturbed sleep. Deities accompanied by consorts and appropriate animals are in attendance. Among these are Shiva and Parvati on Nandi, their bull mount; the animal has its legs outstretched in flight (plate 134). In the third panel from Deogarh, the sage Narayana is seated in his forest hermitage, deep in conversation. The detail of his costume displays the head of the antelope skin he wears, complete with horns (plate 131). Among the ornamental motifs on the pilasters of this temple is Ganesha, the popular elephant-headed god, seated within a three-quarter circle (plate 150). The axe, goad, and ricecake, the last being a favorite sweet, are held in the three hands. Miniature ganas, or implike attendants, of which Ganesha is the lord, are placed at either side.

That Gupta-period sculpture was not confined to carved stone is demonstrated by a series of damaged terracottas from Rajmahal in western India. One plaque depicts a favorite episode from the story of Krishna. Here the youthful god holds up Govardhana Mountain to shelter the herds from the storm of Indra (plate 133). The mountain is represented by a row of rocks; beneath, in apparent disregard of the miracle, a bull mounts a cow. Another plaque is dominated by an unusual figure combining a ram's head, a human body with two arms, and a single elephant foot (plate 178).

The pervasiveness of the Gupta style is borne out by later sculptures dating from the sixth and seventh centuries. In a panel from Rajgir from eastern India, seated deer flank the wheel that symbolizes Buddha's sermon (plate 132). The animals hold their

heads up as if to listen to the Master. They are carved with the same fullness and suppleness of posture noted in the earlier period. A taste for the fantastic is illustrated in the detail from the basement of the ruined Shiva temple at Mundeshvari (plate 160). These composite animals have almost human faces; but their ears are catlike, and their manes and paws decidedly leonine.

Snakes are also associated with Hindu divinities, especially Shiva. In the seventh-century panel from Samalaji in western India, the god stands proudly, surrounded by the crags of his mountain home (plate 104). He is decked with jeweled garlands and an elaborate headdress with a miniature skull; he holds the trident. A snake rears up above the left shoulder of the god.

Kalachuri, Early Chalukya, and Rashtrakuta Periods: Sixth through Eighth Centuries

While rock-cut traditions in the Deccan continued under the patronage of the Kalachuris, the early Chalukyas, and the Rashtrakutas, structural temple architecture also evolved. Most sanctuaries at this time were dedicated to Hindu deities; sculptures were increasingly dominated by iconographic conventions in which animal and bird motifs were integrated with figural imagery.

The sixth-century rock-cut temple on Elephanta Island may have been commissioned by a local Kalachuri ruler. The interior is dominated by an immense triple-headed bust of Shiva sculptured out of solid basalt. Also found at this site was a fully modeled sculpture of Durga slaying the buffalo demon (plate 145). In this depiction, the goddess places one foot on the animal's back and pulls its head back toward her before thrusting the spear through its neck. The power of the buffalo, straining against the grip of the destructive goddess, is communicated through the dramatic posture of the animal.

Contemporary with Elephanta are the rock-cut sanctuaries in the sandstone cliffs above Badami, once the dynastic capital of the early Chalukya rulers. These excavated temples are adorned with a wide range of sculptured deities and ornamental themes incorporating animal motifs. In cave 2 the monolithic bracket is fashioned as a springing beast, its monster head held high (plate 6); the ceiling panel is designed as a wheel with fish as spokes, surrounded by foliate ornament (plate 12). Another ornamental motif is seen in cave 3, where the artist has invented a combination animal that appears either as

an elephant or as a bull (plate 179). Animals and birds continue to serve as mounts for divinities. Karttikeya, the god of war and son of Shiva, who rides on a peacock, is carved onto a wall panel in cave 1 (plate 111). The youthful god leans backward, supported on one hand; the tail of the enlarged peacock is raised up as if to take flight.

At the early Chalukya site of Aihole, there is another rock-cut sanctuary, the Ravana Phadi cave. In a detail from a sculptured image of Shiva, the god holds an upward curling snake as one of his emblems (plate 102). One of the most impressive series of carvings from Aihole is the trio of ceiling panels from the seventh-century Hucchappaya temple. One panel shows Vishnu reclining on the coils of Shesha (plate 103). The serpent's multiheaded hood is raised up as if to guard the precious sleep of the god. Vishnu's disk and sword lie to one side; beneath are Shri and Lakshmi, consorts of the god, as well as Garuda. Another panel is devoted to Brahma, the four-headed god of creation. Beneath the seated god is a bearded ascetic and Brahma's bird mount, the goose, its head held up (plate 114).

Sandstone sculptures in the niches of the outer corridor of the eighth-century "Durga" temple, also at Aihole, illustrate an unusual variety of divinities. Varaha, the boar incarnation of Vishnu, appears with a human body and an animal head to rescue earth, personified as the diminutive goddess Bhu (plate 121). The god raises the goddess on his elbow, nuzzling her affectionately, while placing one foot firmly on the serpent demon who has kept the goddess captive. The drama of this event is heightened by Varaha's energetic striding pose. Another panel shows the goddess Durga, accompanied by her snarling lion, about to slay Mahisha, the buffalo demon (plate 144). The naturalistically rendered buffalo has its head turned well back so that the goddess can plunge her spear into its neck. Also included in this series is an imposing figure of Narasimha, the man-lion incarnation of Vishnu (plate 155). The calmness of the god's four-armed human body is a startling contrast to his fierce leonine head, complete with protruding eyes, fangs, and flowing mane.

The climax of the Early Chalukya artistic tradition is seen in the eighth-century monuments at Pattadakal. Columns in the Virupaksha temple illustrate a profusion of themes in which figural, animal, and vegetal motifs are interwoven. In the half-medallion at the bottom of one column shaft is a running elephant; two geese with flowing tails are seen in the upper garlands. These are connected by a band of delicately incised scrollwork (plate 5).

Examples of the later survival of rock-cut traditions in the Deccan are the eighth-century Hindu cave temples of the Rashtrakuta period at Ellora. Among the magnificent figures and animals sculptured onto the monolithic Kailasanatha temple is a fantastic animal with two bodies and one head (plate 167). This crouching animal has an elephant snout that rolls downward; the eyes are fixed in a demonic stare.

Pallava Period: Seventh and Eighth Centuries

Mamallapuram is one of the most important sites connected with the Pallava rulers of southern India. It is particularly well known for the seventh-century epic compositions that are carved directly onto granite boulders. The largest composition consists of two large boulders completely covered with flying gods, goddesses, and semidivine beings, as well as with elephants and other animals. These all converge on a narrow cleft in the middle, near to which the ascetic figure of Arjuna is seen standing on one foot. Nearby, the animals of the forest are seated peacefully together in their rocky habitat, undisturbed by the presence of man (plate 15); a monkey father picks the back of the monkey mother who feeds her baby (plate 19); a seated monkey, one paw beneath its chin, seems to be listening to something (plate 125). In another detail there are seated deer, one animal scratching its nose, together with a tortoise who steadily works its way forward (plate 16). The elephants are the largest animals; their magnificently rendered forms dominate the whole composition (plate 41). There is even a baby elephant between the feet of the first elephant. More comic are the cats and mice who appear in illustration of a satirical story about a cat who poses as an ascetic to lure innocent mice (plate 48). Here the cat strains upward, mimicking the posture of a holy man; mice huddle playfully at its feet. Within the cleft that forms the focus of the composition are water serpents, suggesting the Ganga River, beside which Arjuna performed his austerities (plate 105). The female serpent divinity, half-snake and half-human, rises up gracefully; beneath her coiled body is another serpent.

As well as the low relief carvings, there are also, at Mamallapuram, three-dimensional granite monoliths of various animals. Characteristic of all these sculptures is the reduction of detail; the unadorned surfaces powerfully communicate the natural form and bulk of the animals. The imposing elephant has a baby elephant between its two hind legs (plates 42–43); the regal lion proudly lifts his head with its delicately incised

mane (plate 51). Considerably more fantastic are the leonine heads that surround the small rock-cut pavilion known as the Tiger's cave, a short distance north of Mamallapuram (plate 165). The enlarged animal heads have protruding tusks and elongated curved horns. A comparable motif is the animal head of Narasimha on the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, which has an almost demonic quality, in contrast with the gently posed human body (plate 156).

Pratihara Period: Ninth and Tenth Centuries

In central and western India art continued to be dominated by traditions established under the Guptas and their successors. From the ninth century onward, parts of these regions were incorporated into the territories of the Pratihara rulers, who sponsored large-scale temple projects. Iconographic conventions at this time became increasingly rigid, and animal themes were often made accessory to figural imagery. Even so, animals and birds remained popular motifs for the adornment of different parts of sacred buildings, especially balustrades, doorways, ceilings, and parapets. In this way, the ancient association of fauna with magical protection continued to be maintained.

The sandstone monuments at Badoh in central India are typical of the Pratihara period. Sculptural fragments, though damaged, illustrate a wide range of subjects. Scenes from everyday life, especially those involving men and animals in hunting, pastoral, and agricultural activities, appear at the tops of walls as continuous friezes (plate 8). In another frieze, an animal battle is depicted, the elephant turning around to discover a lion viciously biting into its back; a stricken warrior lies nearby (plate 45). In the fields around the temples are broken animal sculptures. These three-dimensional carvings depict seated lions with open mouths, staring eyes, and stylized manes (plate 52); there is also seated Hanuman, shown as a powerful and proudly posed male figure with a monkey head (plate 126).

More ornate is the Ghateshvara temple at Badoli in western India. Over the entrance is an arched lintel that appears to spring from open-mouthed aquatic monsters with crocodile jaws and elephant snouts. On the temple roof sit small birds, realistically depicted as if they had temporarily alighted on the eaves (plate 33). In one example, a mother feeds her young; in another, a bird pecks at its feathers. Similarly, stone monkeys invade the upper parts of the temple as living monkeys often do (plates 20–21). Con-

ceived as mischievous but humorous creatures, the monkeys eat rice cakes or crouch as if to leap upwards.

Animals adorn other parts of temples as well. The pierced sandstone windows of the Chaturmukha Mahadeva temple at Nachna in central India are fashioned as rearing leonine beasts with protruding eyes and horns (plate 170). The animals are symmetrically posed as part of the window design, and they carry diminutive human riders who leap onto their backs. Finely carved doorway details from Gadhwa illustrate the first two incarnations of Vishnu, Matsya the fish, and Kurma the tortoise (plates 117–118). These form part of a complete series of incarnations that covers the door frame. The fish has stylized scales and fins; it rests on an enlarged lotus supported by lotus ornament and is accompanied by guardian figures. The tortoise has a naturalistically depicted shell; the head emerges at the upper end. Beneath is a seat of aquatic ornament. The figures above represent the gods and demons churning the cosmic mountain, indicated by a column supported on the tortoise. In yet another example from Gadhwa, Vishnu as Varaha lifts up the goddess Bhudevi on his elbow (plate 122). The ears, snout and curled hairs of the raised boar head are clearly shown. At Naresar there is an unusual depiction of a parrot carrying Rati, the goddess of love (plate 115).

Osian in western India preserves many temples of the Pratihara period. Sandstone wall panels, carved in considerable detail, illustrate different deities and their appropriate animal mounts or opponents. The god Bhairava, an aspect of Shiva, appears with his characteristic dog (plate 128). The animal holds his head up toward the skull staff held by the god; his tail curls as he awaits his master's commands. In another panel, Durga once again slays the buffalo demon (plate 146). The multiarmed goddess thrusts a trident into the animal's body, having just cut off its head, which lies beneath. Escaping from the decapitated body is the demon Mahisha in anthropomorphic form. The raised sword of the goddess indicates that he is just about to be struck down. A wall panel from the contemporary Mritunjaya temple at Jageshwar in northern India shows a dancing Ganesha figure (plate 152). The swaying trunk of the elephant head with its flapping ears and the diagonal thrust of the arm across the body vividly describe the rhythm of the dance.

The merging of naturalistic and fantastic forms in the art of the Pratihara period is exemplified in the double-lion capital from Gwalior in central India (plate 159). Two lion torsoes crouch low, as if ready to spring into the air in opposite directions. The

splendid heads, with staring eyes and bared teeth, are clearly delineated; so, too, the locks of hair on the necks and haunches, and the sharp claws. A more modest representation of a fantastic animal is fitted into a triangular wall panel from an unknown central Indian site (plate 168). This beast has a lion body, with elephant trunk and tusks and even curved horns.

Chandella Period: Tenth and Eleventh Centuries

Khajuraho in central India was once the dynastic capital of the Chandella rulers. Several elaborate temples still stand here, with virtually all of their sculptural portions intact. Executed in a soft yellow sandstone, the Khajuraho carvings are celebrated for their smoothly modeled forms and wealth of iconographic detail.

Fauna, such as the rarely depicted lizard, commonly appear as details of larger panels that are devoted to important cult divinities (plate 158). A bracelet of snakes coiled around the raised hand of Ganesha asserts the connection between the elephant-headed god and Shiva, who is usually decked with snakes himself (plate 107). In another panel, Bhairava is seated with his dog firmly bound on a leash (plate 129). The animal is tensely posed; its snarling teeth are bared as if it is about to spring angrily forward. The rearing beast is a favored theme on Khajuraho temples, especially in recessed wall panels. In one example, the contorted posture of the animal, one leg raised up and the leonine head turned back, suggests unbounded energy (plate 173).

Animals at Khajuraho are also the subjects of large-scale sculptures, sometimes conceived in the round. The imposing elephant, which strides vigorously forward, stands freely at a temple entrance (plate 46). The elephant trunk rolls inward, having already plucked some lotuses. The richly jeweled body and head indicate that this is a ceremonial elephant. A damaged seated figure rides on the back. Varaha appears as a gigantic free-standing animal (plates 123–124). The body of the boar is completely covered with miniature figures, intended to suggest the manifestation of all creation. The boar's head is proudly held up; seated divinities are found on his left side, while the goddess is depicted on his muzzle, safely rescued from the watery depths. Nandi sits within a detached pavilion of the Vishvanatha temple (plate 137). The bull gazes fixedly ahead to the doorway of the sanctuary where Shiva is enshrined. Garlands, jewels, and bells do not detract from the force and mass of the bull as the symbol of Shiva's genera-

tive powers. Other fully modeled animals are more modest; for instance, the rat eagerly eating a rice cake (plate 60).

Animals are included as well in the principal sculptural panels of the Khajuraho temples. In one example from the Lakshmana temple, embracing lovers are interrupted by a baby monkey who teases the couple with a pronged stick (plate 67). The basement reliefs from the same temple depict courtly, military, and erotic scenes. A small ceremonial elephant kneels before a horse (plate 82). The diminutive rider holding the horse's stirrups leans back in a relaxed posture. Of interest here is the confused scale: the warrior to the right is larger than the elephant. There is a frank depiction of sodomy with a mare in which another figure shields his face, perhaps in shame (plate 80). Such highly specific sexual scenes are common in the Khajuraho temples, and they are sometimes interpreted as an expression of esoteric religious practices.

Animals are integrated into the everyday human world on other panels at Khajuraho. In one detail from a wall frieze, a huntsman holding a bow has shot an arrow into a deer (plate 71). The leg of the stricken animal is bitten by a dog; other deer are seen in the background while a bull sits in the foreground. Another scene from the Chitragupta temple shows a lion prancing up onto the back of a war horse to attack the rider, who brandishes a dagger (plate 81). In obvious fright, the horse races ahead. Camels, too, make an occasional appearance. In one fragment, a seated camel is well observed, with its neck curled back and its rear legs about to rise; a rider leans over to take charge of the reins (plate 95).

Kacchapaghata, Gahahadava, and Paramara Periods; Tenth and Eleventh Centuries

Contemporary with the Khajuraho sculptures are those from Suhania, an important temple site of the Kacchapaghata rulers of central India. A typical example is the large-scale seated lion, once intended to guard a sanctuary entrance (plate 53). The relaxed posture of the animal contrasts with the tense expression of the head. Of particular interest is the precise rendering in sandstone of the eyes, whiskers, and curls. Another seated lion, executed in a contrasting style, has sharply carved locks on the neck and legs (plates 54–55). The posture of the animal is rigid; it raises itself on its front legs as if to spring into action. In another detail from Suhania, the enlarged figure of Shiva sits on a diminutive bull (plate 135). The animal, too, is seated, its head turned gently side-

ways. Shiva is evidently in a restrained and contemplative mood; he holds the water pot, an item commonly used by ascetics.

Menal is a contemporary site in western India linked with the Paramara rulers. Among the images displayed on the outer walls of the Mahanaleshvara temple are animal motifs, especially rearing mythical beasts with one leg raised and the head turned around (plate 10). The juxtaposition of these beasts with dancing maidens suggests their magical, life-enhancing association with fertility. In another frieze detail from the same temple, the gods and demons wind the serpent Vasuki around the axial mountain, represented here by a potlike emblem, to churn the cosmic ocean (plate 106). On the right, a seated divinity, a horse, and an elephant have already been produced from the ocean.

Pala Period: Tenth and Eleventh Centuries

Most of the sculptures from eastern India dating from the Pala period are separated from their original temple settings. Built in brick, little sacred architecture from this era has survived. The sculpture of the Pala era may be compared with contemporary artistic production in central and western India; the choice of basalt and the fully rounded figural carving lend these pieces an easily identifiable style. Animals, and birds continue to appear, but mostly as accessory themes in panels dominated by an increasingly complex figural iconography.

A fine example of the Pala style is Karttikeya sitting on the peacock (plate 112). Unusually, the bird faces forward, the wings outstretched. The heads of the god and bird are inclined gracefully in different directions. Marichi is a rarely depicted goddess who rides in a chariot pulled by miniature pigs (plate 120). The animals at the base of the panel from Nalanda are provided with tusks and hairy backs.

Agni, the god of fire, who is constantly surrounded by flames, rides on the ram (plate 143). The diminutive animal in this composition lies docilely before the throne, one of the god's feet resting on its back. The sun deity, Surya, invariably appears majestically in a chariot drawn by seven horses. In an example from Kasipur, the horses are rendered in careful detail; the animals leap upward in flight (plate 140). Their reins are held by Aruna, the regent of the dawn; wheels indicating the chariot are seen at the sides. In yet another detail of a Pala-Period panel, rearing lions provide the support for the throne of meditating Buddha, whose right hand touches the earth in witness of his

enlightenment (plate 154). The inclusion of lion motifs proclaims the regal nature of the Master.

Somavamshi and Ganga Periods: Tenth through Thirteenth Centuries

In Orissa on the eastern coast, a distinctive artistic tradition developed, reaching a climax under the Ganga rulers in the thirteenth century. At Bhubaneshwar, one of the capitals of the region, a large number of sacred monuments still stand. One of the finest is the Mukteshvara temple, erected during the tenth century. The detail from the window frames illustrates the intermingling of animal and vegetal motifs. Monkeys frolic in undulating lotus stalks that emerge from an outstretched crab (plate 23). In another detail from the same temple, a corner block is carved with a lion and elephant, both with double bodies and single heads (plate 161). The lion head is surrounded by a long mane; the open mouth suggests the proud bearing of the animal, which claws at the diminutive elephant beneath.

The great Surya temple at Konarak was constructed by Narasimha (1238–64), a Ganga ruler who seems to have taken a personal interest in the monument. It was conceived as a colossal chariot of the sun god, drawn on twelve pairs of wheels by a team of seven horses. Though greatly ruined and only partly reconstructed, the temple preserves khondalite sculptures on the terrace and chlorite wall panels.

At the base of the terrace is a continuous frieze with elephants in forest settings. Far from the world of man, an elephant mounts his mate in a frank depiction of animal sexuality (plate 47). Elsewhere, elephants are driven from the forest by riders and musicians (plate 92). Even the spokes of the wheels that adorn the terrace are provided with sculptures. Within one miniature medallion that is completely surrounded by foliation, there is a leaping horse with a rider who spears a fallen demon or animal (plate 83). The horse holds its front hoof high and turns its head slightly to one side as if it prances. Also found on the sides of the terrace are embracing serpent deities, their snake bodies entwined around a semicircular pilaster (plate 108). The embracing couple, who have human torsos, lean toward each other. Their heads are protected by multiheaded cobra hoods. The terrace also depicts rearing fantastic animals, often with lion bodies and elephant heads (plate 172).

Large-scale, three-dimensional animal sculptures are another feature of the Kona-

rak monument, communicating both natural forces and royal power. The realistic details of these animals can be seen in the paws and tail from one of the lions (plates 56–57). More unusual is the kneeling elephant, with ears laid back and front feet tucked beneath its body, its strength and violence implied by the stricken figure held in its trunk (plate 91). A monster-headed lion leaping over a prostrate elephant expresses its demonic energy in its protruding eyes and open jaws; its upheld front paws and standing back feet suggest a springing movement (plates 162–63). The curls of hair on the neck and haunches are clearly carved; the tail curls up the back to roll over onto the neck.

Smaller chlorite images are used in the Konarak temple for panels set into wall niches. The seven horses conveying the chariot of the temple's solar deity are depicted in animated postures (plate 141). The god of the waters, Varuna, sits appropriately on an aquatic monster (plate 157). The squatting animal is rendered in vivid detail, particularly its elephant snout, tusks, and crocodile body. The aquatic nature of the animal is reflected even in the watery foliation inscribed onto its body.

Nolamba, Late Chalukya, and Hoysala Periods: Ninth through Thirteenth Centuries

Deccan temple architecture incorporates animal motifs into different parts of the structure. On the corners of the upper story of the Bhoganandishvara temple at Nandi, a ninth-century Nolamba-period monument, seated bulls are rendered in full relief (plate 13). In between are figures of Shiva, some of which are accompanied by attendant bulls. Within the same temple are finely carved ceiling panels. One detail shows the god Agni holding a club and riding on a ram (plate 142); in another detail from the same ceiling panel, Indra brandishes a thunderbolt while riding his elephant (plate 151). Both deities are easily recognized by their animal mounts.

The Doddar Basappa temple at Dambal, a twelfth-century Late Chalukya monument, has a magnificent sculpture of Nandi (plate 138). The bull is comfortably seated while staring devotedly ahead. The sculptured planes of polished basalt render the form and mass with great naturalism. Garlands and bells indicate that this is a ceremonial animal.

Of almost the same date is the Hoysala period temple dedicated to Shiva at Halebid. Successive friezes of animals on the basement of this monument are adorned with vegetal ornament. Rows of aquatic beasts have jeweled elephant bodies, crocodile mouths

and snouts, and flowing tails; they are ridden by miniature figures (plate 176). In the middle of these creatures is a monster mask with protruding eyes and tusks. The wall panels at Halebid are intricately carved, the schist medium permitting an exuberant decoration that invades all parts of the compositions. The god Subrahmanya rides on his peacock (plate 113) smothered in jewels and garlands rendered in high relief. The peacock is finely carved with foliate detail; it even holds a tuft of greenery in its beak. Another panel shows Shiva and Parvati riding on Nandi (plate 136), who is richly adorned with bells, jewels, and a saddle. The bulk of the seated figure of Ganesha is given a highly ornate setting (plate 153), the trunk of the god feeds on the rice cake held in one hand, and his characteristic pot belly rests heavily on his folded legs. His jeweled crown is surrounded by an ornamented arch with a monster mask at the apex.

At the contemporary Chennakeshava temple at Belur, a warrior battles with an enlarged leonine beast (plate 171); this animal serves as an emblem of the Hoysala dynasty. Fully carved in the round, both man and beast are engaged in fierce combat. The animal has an enlarged head with protruding eyes and horns; a lotus is sculptured within the coiled tail upon its back.

Vijayanagara Period: Fourteenth through Sixteenth Centuries

Of the later temple styles in the Deccan and southern India, the style that developed during the Vijayanagara period is the most significant. Vijayanagara sculpture represents an integrated artistic tradition that spread uniformly throughout most of the region. Animal friezes are invariably executed in granite and appear as prominent motifs on basements, balustrades, and columns. Vijayanagara temple architecture is distinguished by the extensive halls that housed accessory religious activities. Peripheral columns are elaborately treated, often with large animal compositions.

At Vijayanagara itself, the monuments proclaim the might of the emperors through the repetition of processions, hunting expeditions, and battle scenes, all of which feature royal elephants and horses. These favored themes cover the granite blocks of the fourteenth-century multistoried platform at Vijayanagara (plate 72). Hunters shoot arrows at deer which, however, frolic to safety. Another block depicts mounted sword-bearing warriors engaged in fierce battle (plate 86). Their horses are war animals, one of which is provided with a protective cloak; while the other rears up in attack. More

comic are two animated monkeys seated beside a tree (plate 24). They are obviously enjoying themselves hugely as they eagerly eat stolen rice cakes.

Aquatic emblems on the enclosure walls of the sixteenth-century Raghunatha temple at Vijayanagara include fish, tortoises, and watery beasts (plate 26). Other themes usually reserved for column panels include a woman with a rearing horse (plate 85). The horse appears here as an erotic partner, thrusting its sexual organs toward the woman, who is of equal height. At the Vitthala temple there is also a model of a linga, the phallus of the god Shiva, over which rears a protective serpent (plate 109). A comparable panel from the Ekambareshvara temple at Kanchipuram depicts Markandeya, one of Shiva's devotees, embracing the linga, here also sheltered by a serpent (plate 110).

In another architectural application, animal motifs are employed on balustrades flanking access steps. In an example from the sixteenth-century Vitthala temple at the capital, the mythical beast has a flowing tongue that emerges out of its open mouth to form the curved side of the balustrade (plate 174). The animal itself, rendered partly in relief, rears up to do battle with a small elephant.

Monolithic images sculptured out of huge granite boulders are also found at Vijayanagara. The colossal carving of Ganesha is confined within a small and dark shrine (plate 1), but the spatial limitations only emphasize the power of the deity's elephant head.

Among the many temples constructed throughout southern India during the sixteenth century is the temple at Vellore dedicated to Jalakanteshvara, a form of Shiva. On the carved columns of the open hall located in the outer enclosure, the peripheral piers are fashioned as rearing beasts, sculptured in granite almost in the round (plate 166). These mythical animals have leonine bodies and claws; their fierce heads have enlarged ears and eyes, and elongated tusks and snouts. Encouraged by the warriors who ride on their backs, the beasts trample aquatic monsters ornamented with foliation. An exceptional pier is carved as a fully modeled leopard crouching in agony as it is brutally stabbed by two warriors (plate 97). The body of the animal has delicately incised spots.

One of the panels carved onto the column shafts of the Vellore temple depicts a figure seated on a fish (plate 119). That he is an ascetic is indicated by his fanlike headdress and his armlets. In another panel, Krishna battles with a demon in the form of a crane, forcing open its beak (plate 116). While only carved in shallow relief, the ener-

getic poses of the figure and bird suggest a fight in earnest. Hanuman also appears on a column panel as the faithful devotee of Rama, facing toward his lord, his eyes staring ahead (plate 127). While his hands are held together in adoration, his tail curls up behind mischievously. The human torso is richly attired; even the monkey head has a jeweled band.

Rajput Period: Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

Western Indian art continued to evolve in later centuries, especially in the Hindu shrines that were patronized by local Rajput rulers. Sculpture in sandstone tended to become more rigid, but many older conventions were retained, including the use of animals with regal or martial associations.

The ceremonial horse serving as an ornamental bracket at Amar Sagar emerges partly from the wall; the details of the rich bridle and saddle are clearly carved (plate 7). Also prominently displayed is the leonine beast that forms the capping piece on a porch parapet of one of the temples at Jaisalmer (plate 14). The animal has a monster mask and a curling tail; it pounces on a diminutive horse. In another example from Jaisalmer, animals form part of the decor of a pierced stone window (plate 11). Some of the animals are war horses mounted by warriors; others include a charging elephant, a fighting lion, and an aquatic beast.

A panel from Lodabara shows a cart carrying a seated couple engaged in conversation, pulled by two horses (plate 84). Most curious is a birdlike tortoise with four feet sculptured onto one of the gateways of the fort at Chitorgarh (plate 177). This fantastic animal, which is worked into an elaborate foliate design, asserts the magical protective power of natural themes at gateways.

Malla and Later Periods: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Bengal preserves a unique series of brick temples that imitate indigenous hut forms. The outer walls are covered with terracotta plaques that illustrate a large range of narrative, votive, and ornamental themes, including numerous animals. The carving of the bricks is invariably lively; the animated figures and animals have an exuberant folk quality.

Terracotta sculptures on the seventeenth-century temples at Bishnupur illustrate

different animal subjects. The base of the walls of the Madana Mohana temple is provided with an animated frieze of geese (plate 35). Each terracotta plaque depicts a bird in a different posture; lotus flowers in between suggest their watery home. In a frieze detail from another temple, deer proceed peacefully through the forest; one animal is mounted by its horned mate (plate 17). A plaque from the Keshta Raya temple depicts a fierce lion sinking its teeth into a deer (plate 59); the victim holds its head up in its death agony. Another panel from the same temple has an unusual depiction of a striped hyena with a curved hairy back (plate 64). From the Shyama Raya temple there is the comic animal motif of the grinning bear, seated in an almost human manner as if about to eat something (plate 65).

Pastoral scenes are also popular. A plaque from Pathra illustrates cows with a herdswoman; the six animals hold their heads up obediently as they are attended by the modestly attired girl (plate 75). On another frieze, a river boat with oarsmen carries what seems to be a seated deity within a small shrine (plate 93). An elephant sheltered by an umbrella, an emblem of royalty, stands within the boat.

Further Reading

The reader who wishes to learn more about the general history of Indian scuplture may consult J. C. Harle, *The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), and Susan L. and John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1985). Both of these recent surveys provide extensive bibliographies. Additional illustrations of animal sculptures are found in Asis Sen, *Animal Motifs in Ancient Indian Art* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1972), and K. Bharatha Iyer, *Animals in Indian Sculpture* (Bombay: Taraporevala, 1972). For the architectural context of the scriptures, the reader may refer to George Michell, *The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to Its Meaning and Forms* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), and, by the same author, *The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India*. Volume One: *Buddhist, Jain, Hindu* (New York: Penguin Viking, 1989).

STELLA SNEAD

PLATES

Plate 4. Bull.
Column capital, sandstone.
Rampurva, Eastern India. Maurya period, third century B.C. Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi

Plate 5. Elephant, birds, and figures.
Column shaft, sandstone.
Virupaksha temple, Pattadakal, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, eighth century

Plate 6. Rearing vyala.
Rock-cut brackets, sandstone.
Cave 2, Badami, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, sixth century

Plate 7. Ceremonial horse.
Wall bracket, sandstone.
Amar Sagar, near Jaisalmer, Western India. Rajput period, fifteenth century

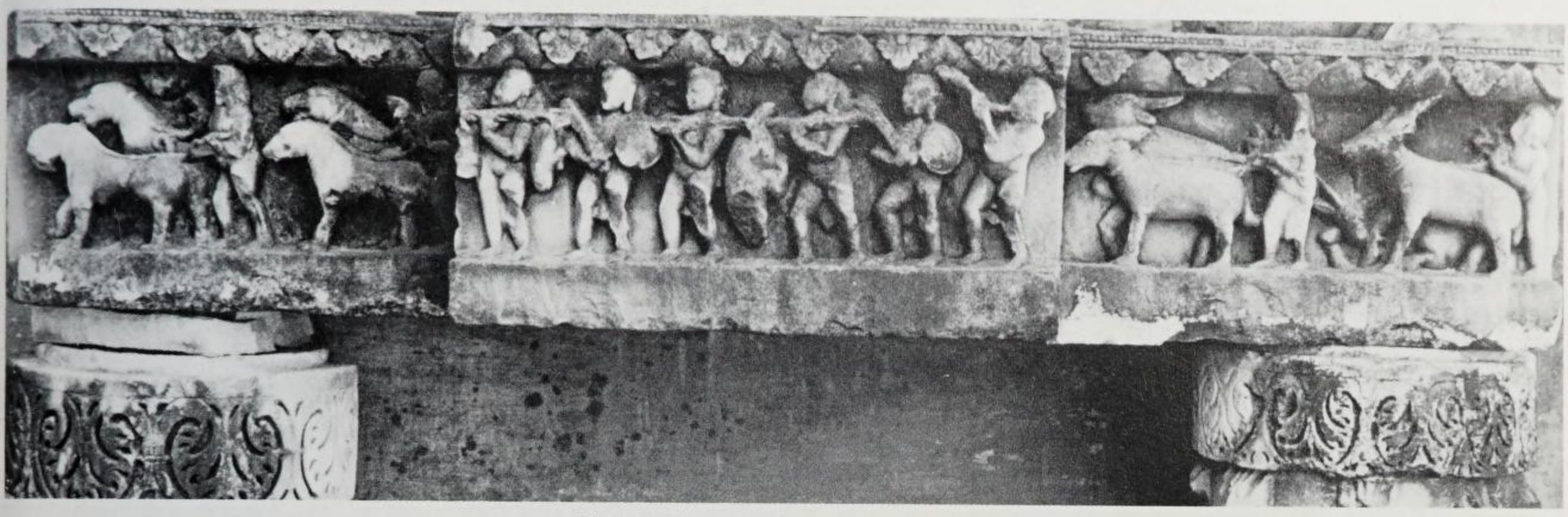


Plate 8. Hunting and pastoral scenes.
Wall frieze, sandstone.
Badoh, Central India. Pratihara period, tenth century. Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior

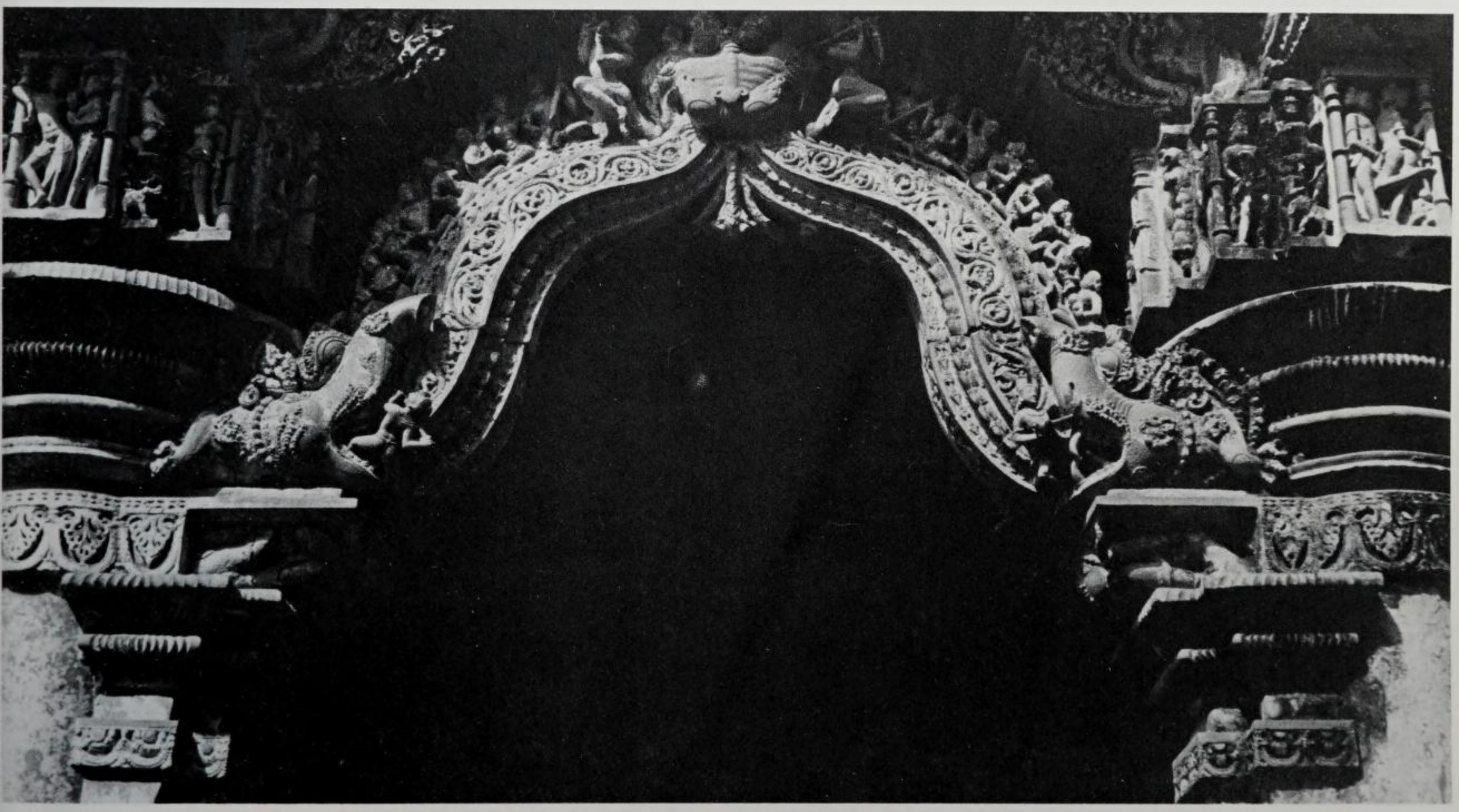


Plate 9. Open-mouthed makaras and monster mask.
Arched lintel, sandstone.
Ghateshvara temple, Badoli, Western India. Pratihara period, ninth century

Plate 10. Vyalas and maiden.
Wall sculpture, sandstone.
Mahanaleshvara temple, Menal, Western India. Rajput period, eleventh century

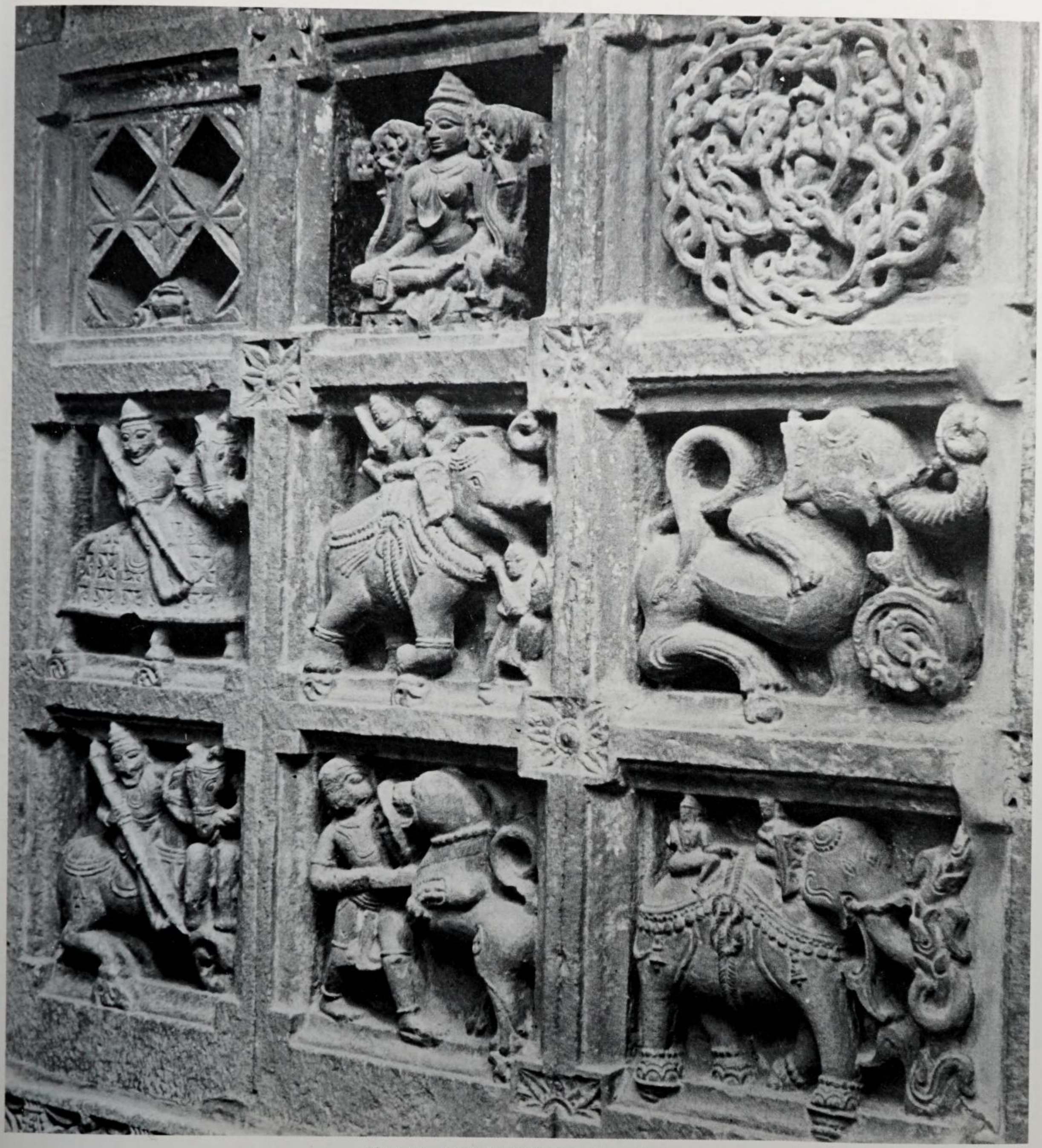


Plate 11. Animals, hunters, and warriors.
Pierced window, sandstone.
Jain temple, Jaisalmer, Western India. Rajput period, fifteenth century

Plate 12. Fish medallion.
Rock-cut ceiling, sandstone.
Cave 2, Badami, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, sixth century

Plate 13. Seated bulls.
Parapet sculpture, granite.
Bhoganandishvara temple, Nandi, Southern India. Nolamba period, ninth century

Plate 14. Leonine beast.
Parapet sculpture, sandstone.
Jain temple, Jaisalmer, Western India. Rajput period, fifteenth century

ANIMALS IN NATURE

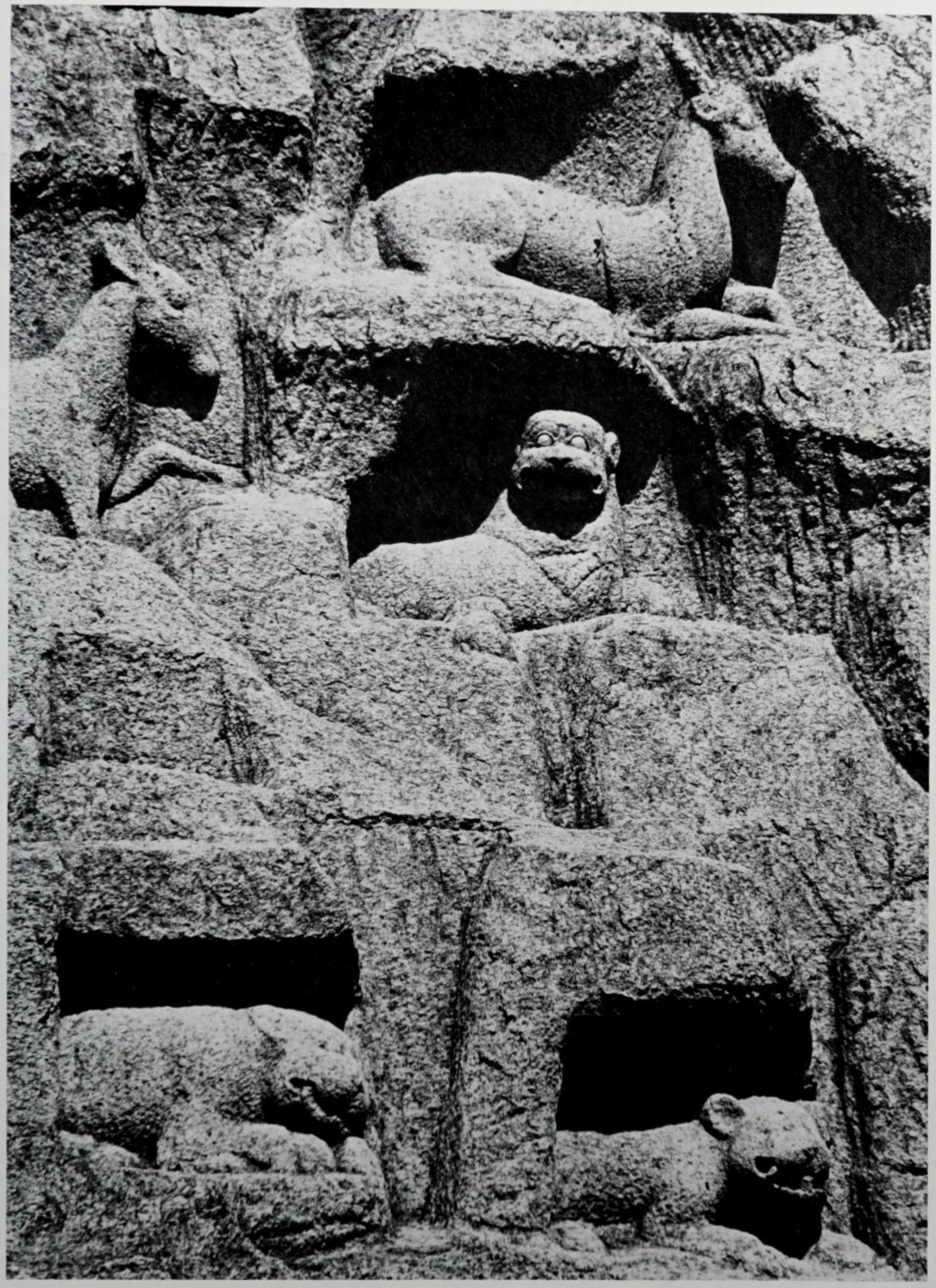


Plate 15. Animals in rocks.
Detail of rock-cut composition, granite.
Arjuna's Penance, Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period, seventh century

Plate 16. Seated deer.
Detail of composition, granite.
Arjuna's Penance, Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period, seventh century

Plate 17. Deer.
Basement frieze, terracotta.
Bishnupur, Eastern India. Malla period, seventeenth century

Plate 18. Monkey head.
Sculptural fragment, terracotta.
Patna, Eastern India. Maurya period, third century B.C. Museum, Patna

Plate 19. Monkey family.
Sculptural detail, granite.
Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period, seventh century

Plates 20 and 21. Monkeys.
Sculptures on roof, sandstone.
Ghateshvara temple, Baroli, Western India. Pratihara period, ninth century

Plate 22. Monkeys riding an elephant.
Column medallion, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 23. Monkeys in foliation.
Window frame, sandstone.
Mukteshvara temple,
Bhubaneshwar, Eastern India.
Somavamshi period, tenth
century

Plate 24. Monkeys and tree.
Basement block, granite.
Mahanavami platform, Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara period, fourteenth century

Plate 25. Starfish.
Seal, steatite.
Mohenjodaro, Pakistan. Harappa culture, second millennium B.C. National Museum, New Delhi

Plate 26. Aquatic emblems.
Enclosure walls, granite.
Raghunatha temple, Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

Plate 27. Head of a peacock.
Sculptural fragment, terracotta.
Kausambi, Central India. Shunga period (?), second century B.C. Museum, Allahabad

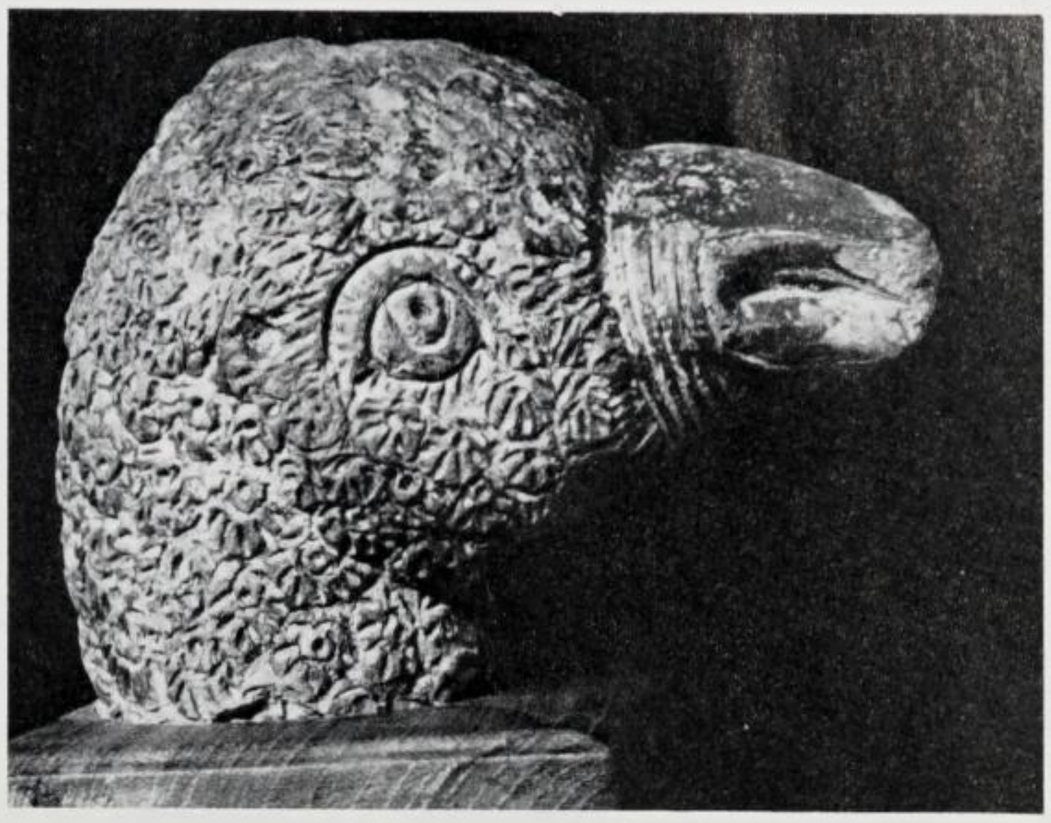


Plate 28. Peacock.
Medallion on post, sandstone.
Stupa 2, Sanchi, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 29. Geese.
Medallion on post, sandstone.
Stupa 2, Sanchi, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 30. Peacocks.
Sculptures on gateway architrave, sandstone.
Stupa 1, Sanchi, Central India. Satavahana period, first century

Plate 31. Ducks and lotuses.
Panels on gateway post, sandstone.
Stupa 1, Sanchi, Central India. Satavahana period, first century

Plate 32. Geese.
Abacus of free-standing column, sandstone.
Sanchi, Central India. Maurya period, third century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Sanchi

Plate 33. Birds.
Sculptures on roof, sandstone.
Ghateshvara temple, Badoli, Western India. Pratihara period, ninth century

Plate 34. Parrot.
Detail of post, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period,
second century B.C.

Plate 35. Geese.
Basement frieze, terracotta.
Madana Mohana temple, Bishnupur, Eastern India.
Malla period, seventeenth century

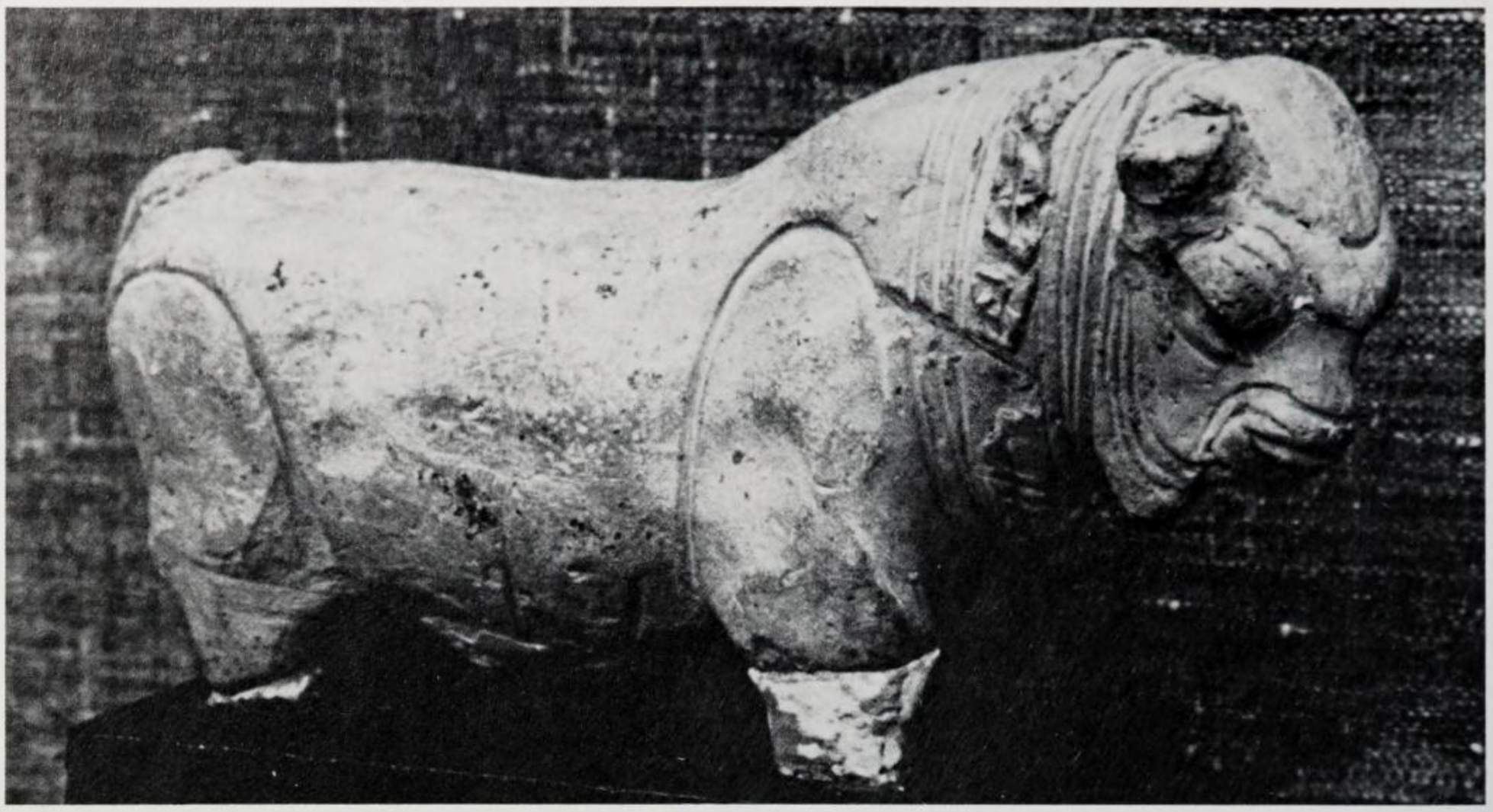


Plate 36. Bull.
Figurine, terracotta.
Mohenjodaro, Pakistan.
Harappa culture, second millennium B.C. National Museum, New Delhi

Plate 37. Bull.
Seal, steatine.
Mohenjodaro, Pakistan. Harappa culture, second millennium B.C.
National Museum, New Delhi

Plate 38. Horse.
Abacus of free-standing column, sandstone.
Sarnath, Central India. Maurya period, third century B.C.

Plate 39. Elephant and lotuses.
Medallion on post, sandstone.
Stupa 2, Sanchi, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 40. Elephant.
Abacus of free-standing column, sandstone.
Sarnath, Central India. Maurya period, third century B.C.

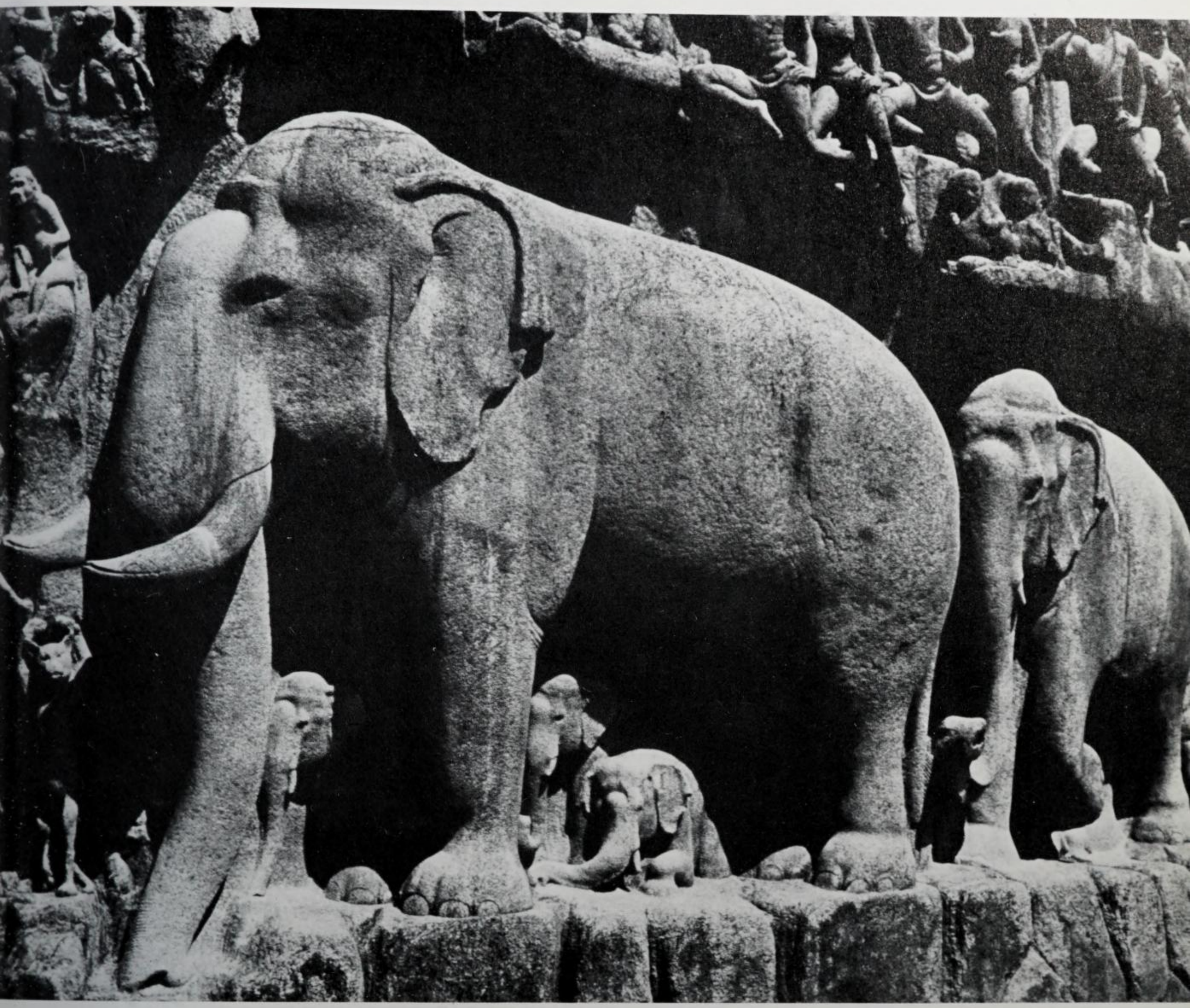
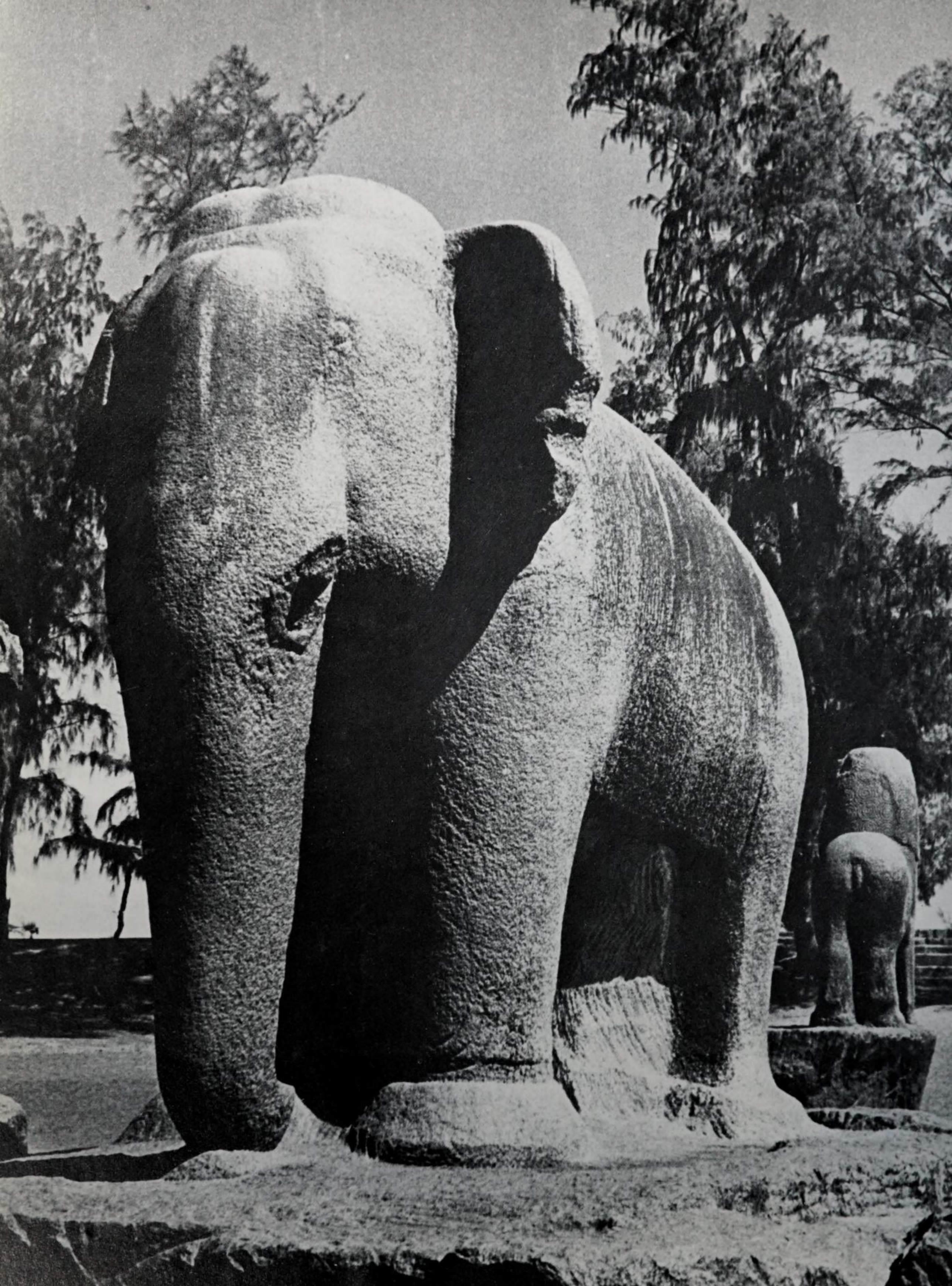
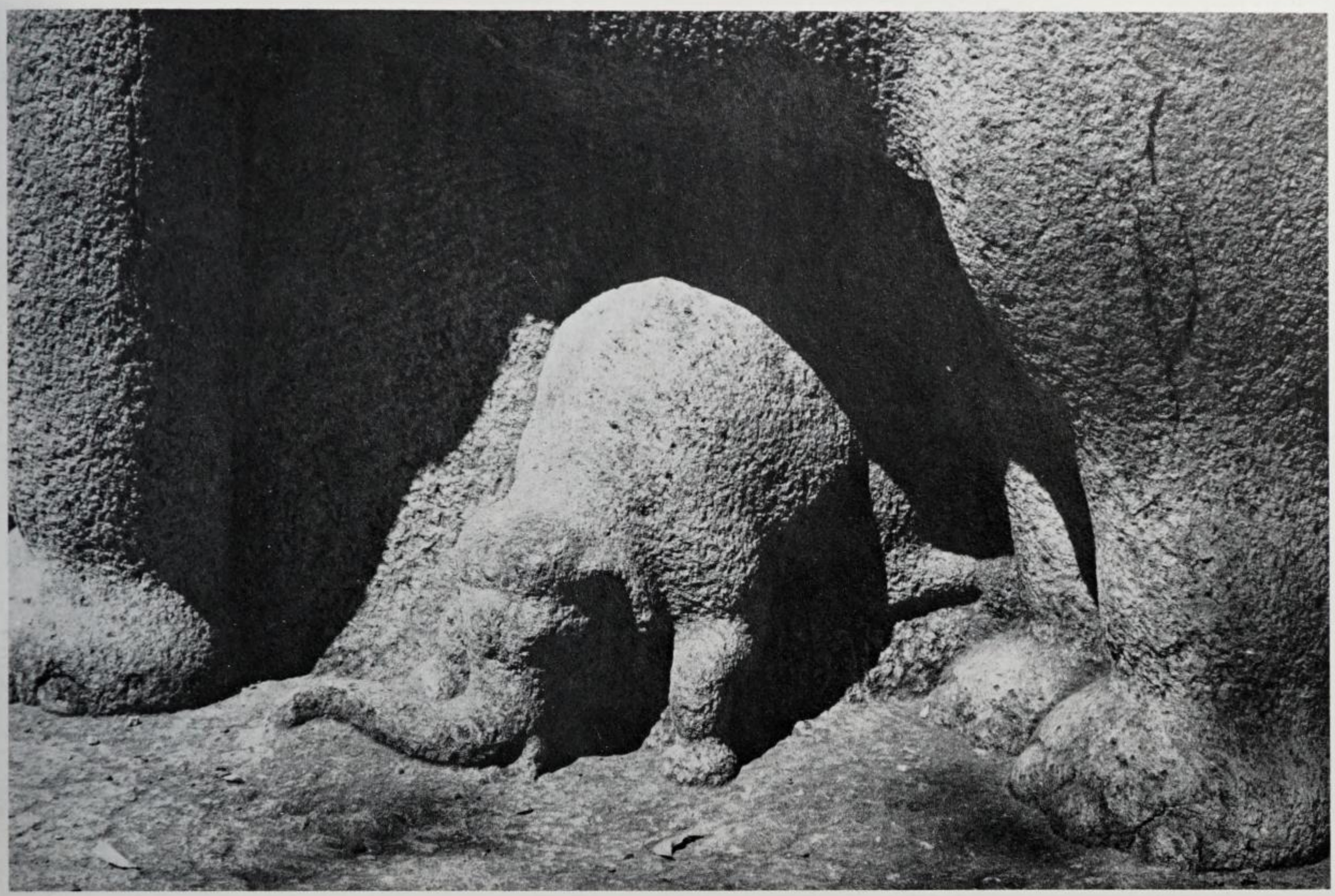


Plate 41. Elephants.
Sculptural detail, granite.
Arjuna's Penance, Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period, seventh century





Plates 42 and 43. Elephant and baby.
Monolithic sculpture, granite.
Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period, seventh century

Plate 44. Elephants.
Basement frieze, granite.
Nataraja temple, Chidambaram, Southern India. Chola period, thirteenth century

Plate 45. Elephant attacked by a lion.
Basement frieze, sandstone.
Gadarmal temple, Badoh, Central India. Pratihara period, ninth century

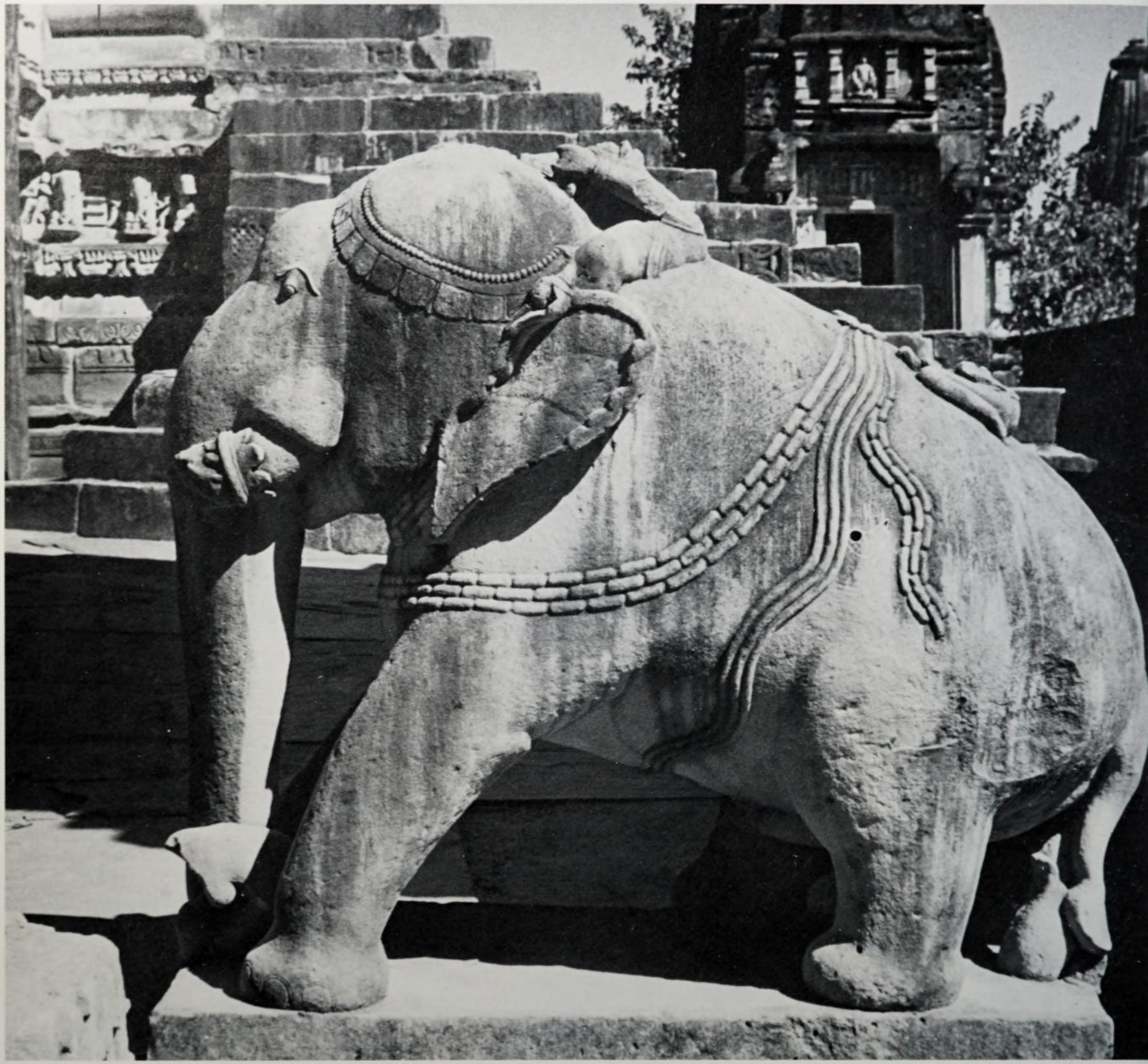


Plate 46. Elephant.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century

Plate 47. Rutting elephants.
Basement detail, khondalite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period, thirteenth century

Plate 48. (opposite) Cat and mice.
Sculptural detail, granite.
Arjuna's Penance, Mamallapuram, Southern India.
Pallava period, seventh century

Plate 49. Three lions.
Base of column, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.
Indian Museum, Calcutta

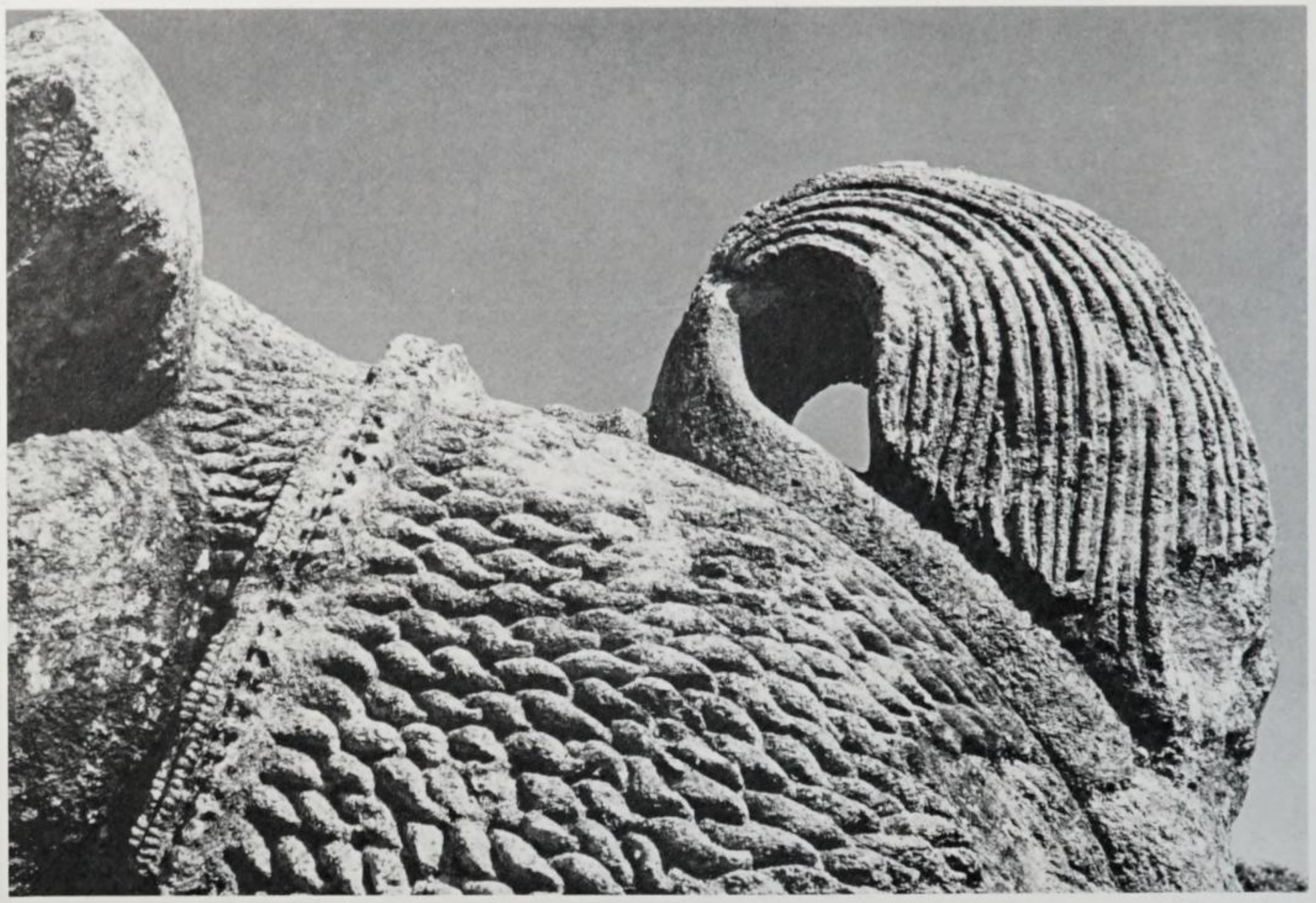
Plate 50. Lion head.
Sculptural fragment, sandstone.
Mathura, Central India. Kushana period,
second century. Government Museum, Mathura

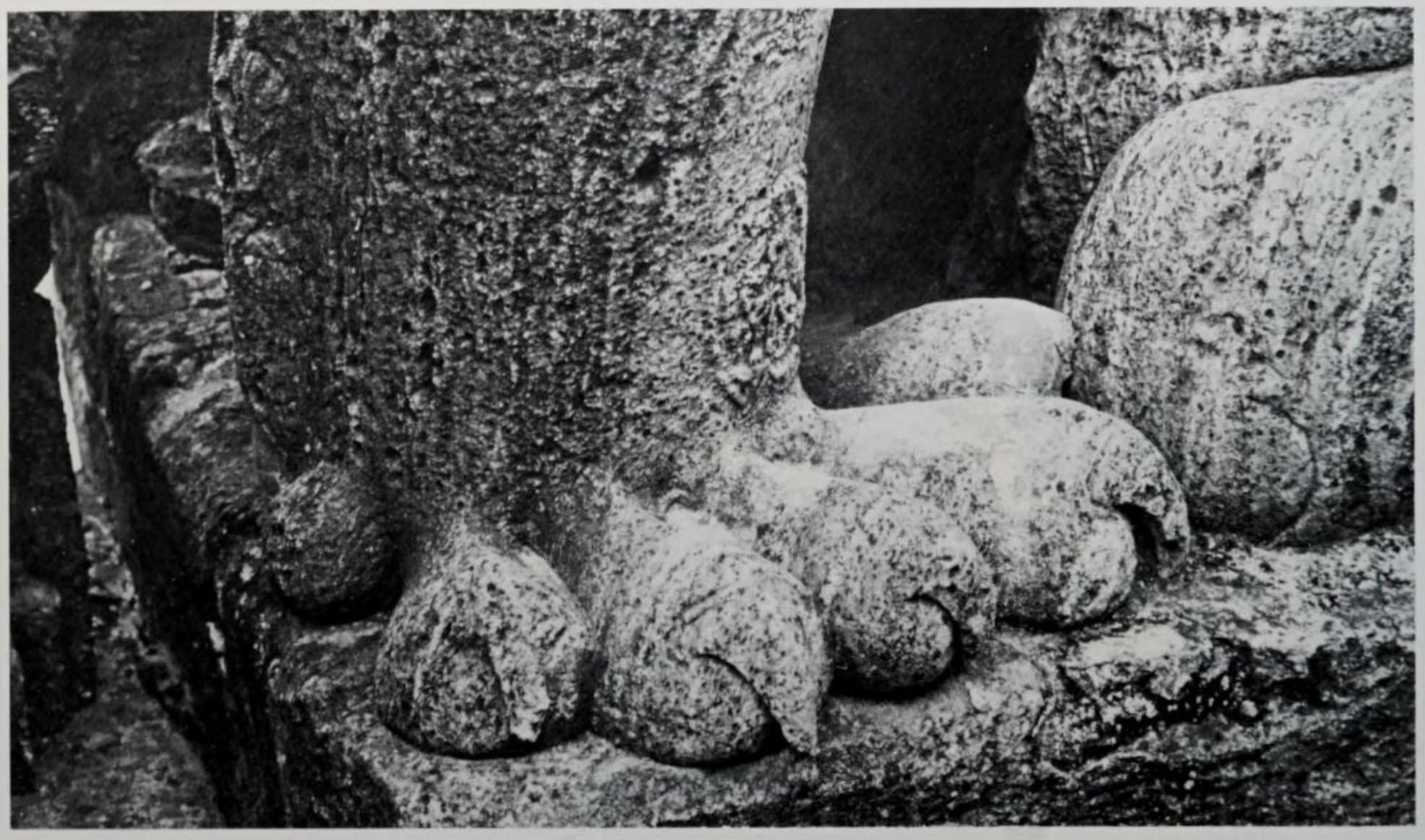
Plate 51. (opposite) Lion.
Sculptured monolith, granite.
Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period,
seventh century

Plate 52. Lion.
Sculptural fragment, sandstone.
Gadarmal temple, Badoh, Central India. Pratihara period, ninth century

Plate 53. Seated lion.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Suhania (?), Central India. Kacchapaghata period, eleventh century. Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior

Plates 54 and 55. Seated lion.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Suhania, Central India. Kacchapaghata period, eleventh century. Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior





Plates 56 and 57. Lion tail and paws.
Sculptural details, khondalite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period, thirteenth century

Plate 58. Tiger.
Seal, steatite.
Mohenjodaro, Pakistan. Harappa culture, second millennium B.C.
National Museum, New Delhi

Plate 59. Lion attacking a deer.
Wall plaque, terracotta.
Keshta Raya temple, Bishnupur, Eastern India. Malla period, seventeenth century

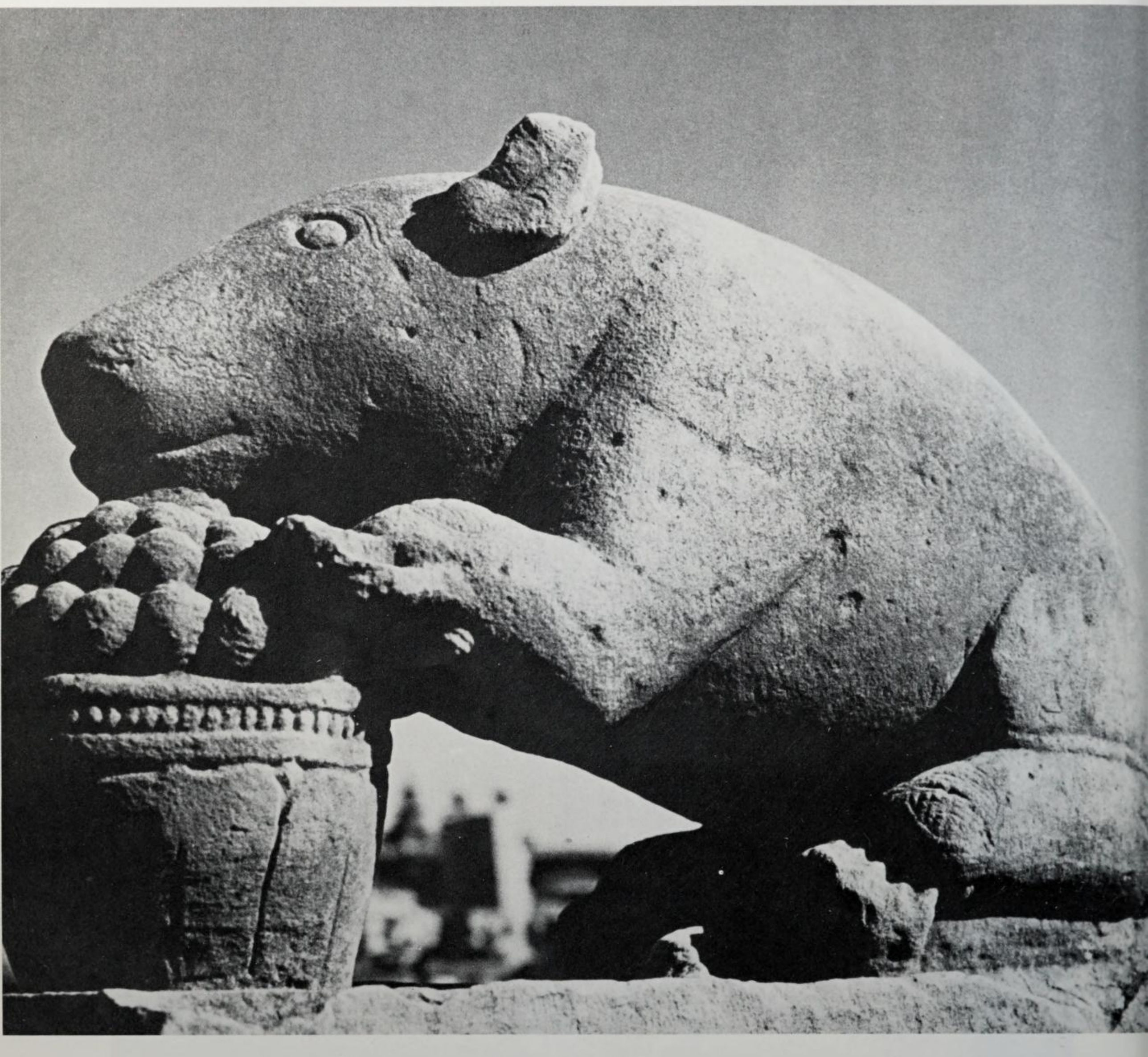


Plate 60. Rat eating a rice cake.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century. Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

Plate 61. Mongoose.
Figurine, terracotta.
Patna, Eastern India. Maurya period, third century B.C.

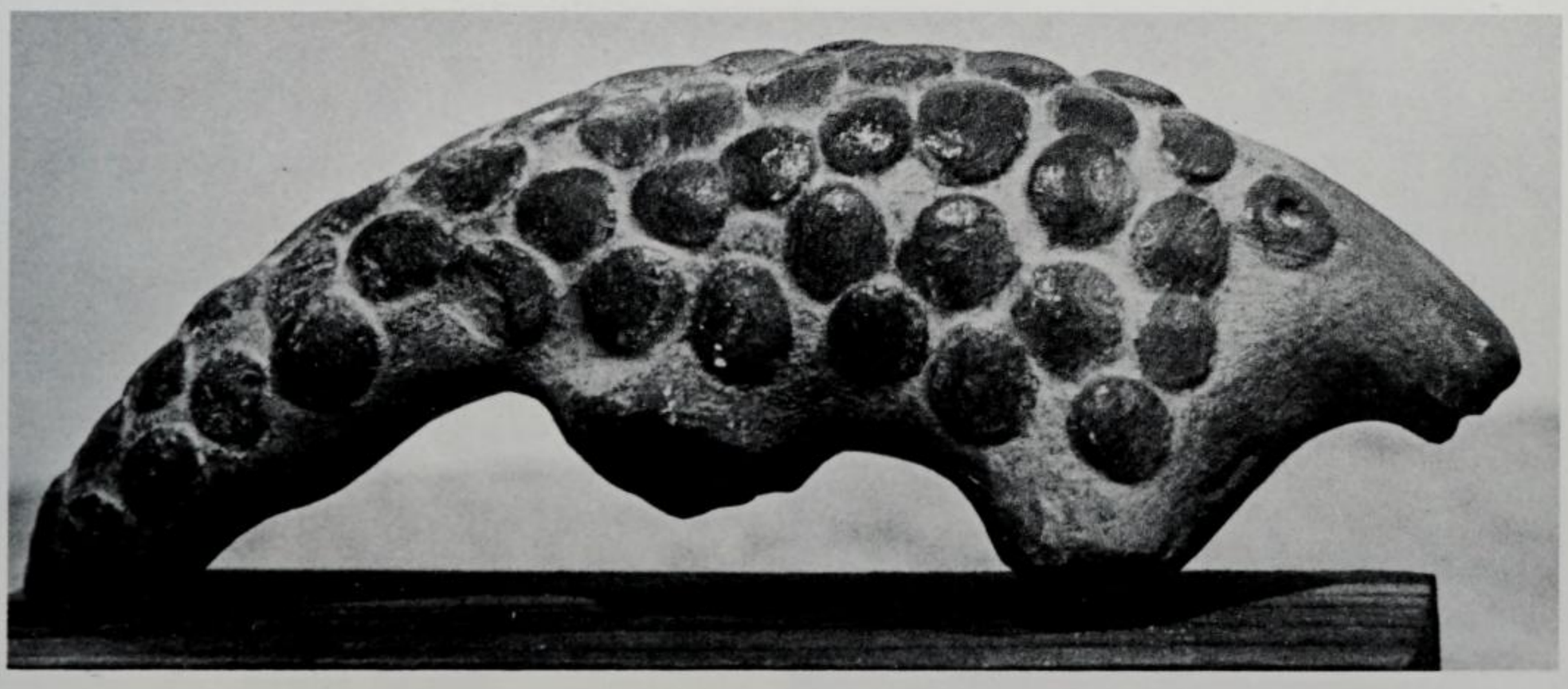


Plate 62. Anteater.
Figurine, terracotta.
Mohenjodaro, Pakistan. Harappa culture, second millennium B.C. National Museum, New Delhi

Plate 63. Squirrel.
Column sculpture, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.
Indian Museum, Calcutta

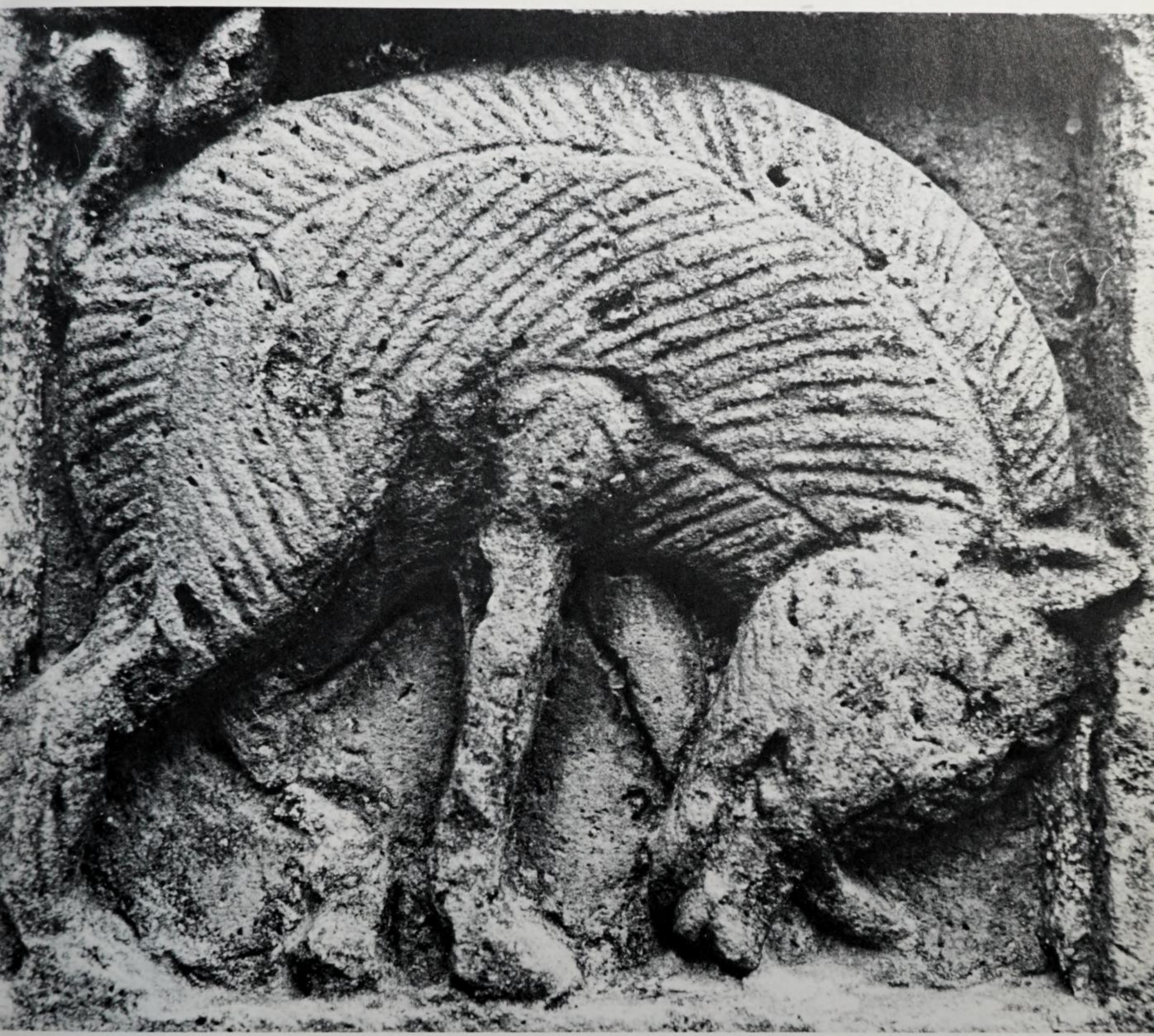


Plate 64. Hyena.
Wall plaque, terracotta.
Keshta Raya temple, Bishnupur, Eastern India. Malla period, seventeenth century

Plate 65. Bear.
Wall plaque, terracotta.
Shyama Raya temple, Bishnupur, Eastern India. Malla period, seventeenth century

Plate 66. Monkeys in trees.
Medallion on post, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 67. Lovers and a monkey.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Central India.
Chandella period, tenth century

Plate 68. Hunters shooting at deer.
Medallion on post, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 69. Deer with riders.
Gateway post, sandstone.
Stupa 1, Sanchi, Central India. Satavahana period, first century

Plate 70. Deer in hermitage.
Detail of gateway frieze, sandstone.
Stupa 1, Sanchi, Central India. Satavahana period, first century

Plate 71. Hunting scene with deer.
Detail of frieze, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century. Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

Plate 72. Hunters with deer.
Basement relief, granite.
Mahanavami platform, Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara period, fourteenth century

Plate 73. Bullocks with cart.
Column medallion, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 74. Cow feeding calf.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Agroha, Western India. Chauhan period, tenth century. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Plate 75. Cows with herdswoman.
Wall plaque, terracotta.
Pathra, Eastern India. Eighteenth century. Asutosh Museum, University of Calcutta

Plate 76. Horse and rider.
Column medallion, sandstone.
Stupa 2, Sanchi, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 77. Horses with riders.
Column detail, volcanic trap.
Cave 7, Bedsa, Deccan. Satavahana period, first century B.C.

Plate 78. Horse and rider.
Detail of column sculpture, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 79. Feeding a horse.
Frieze detail, schist.
Gandhara, Pakistan. Kushana period, second century. Indian Museum, Calcutta

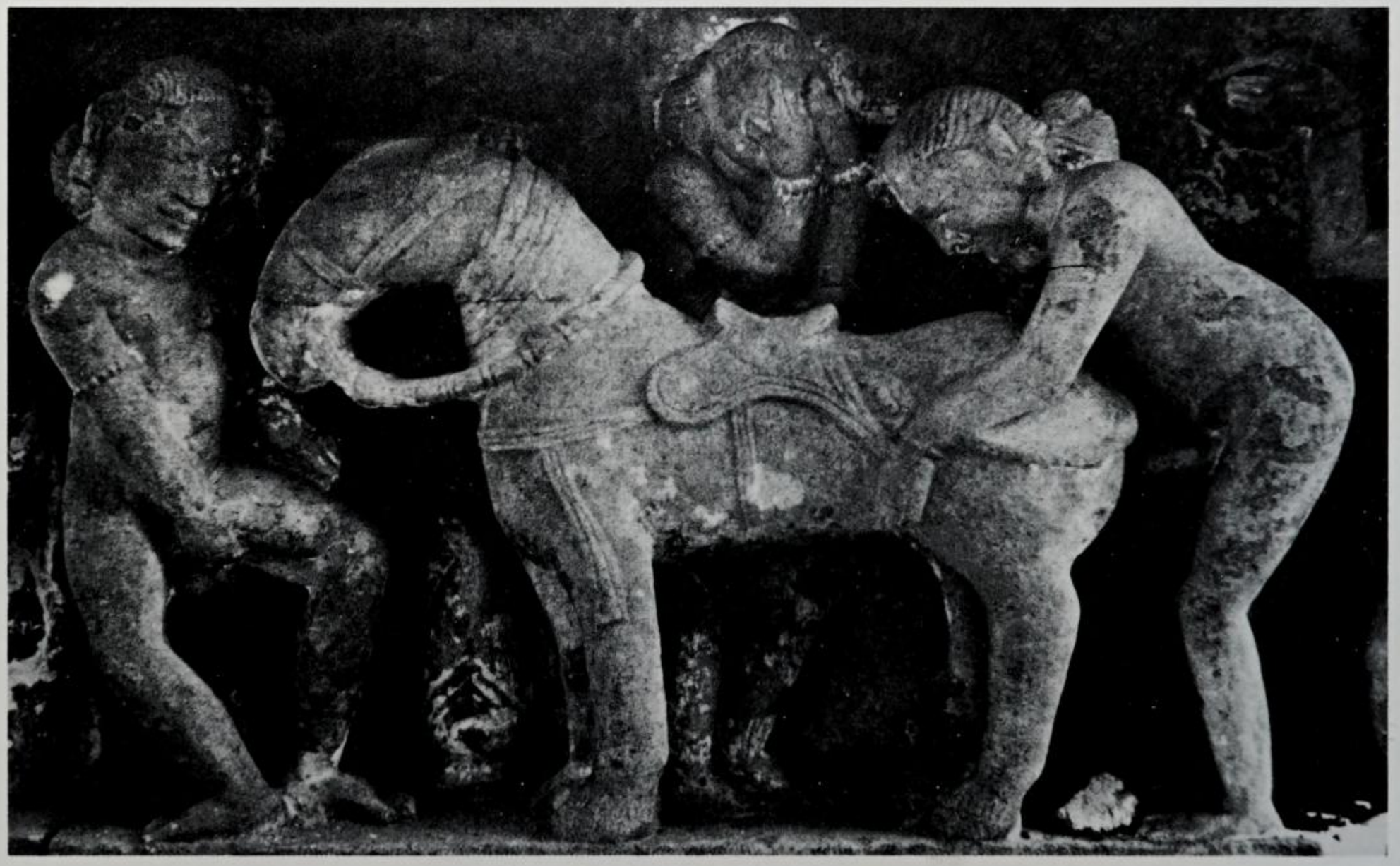


Plate 80. Sodomy with a horse.
Basement detail, sandstone.
Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, tenth century

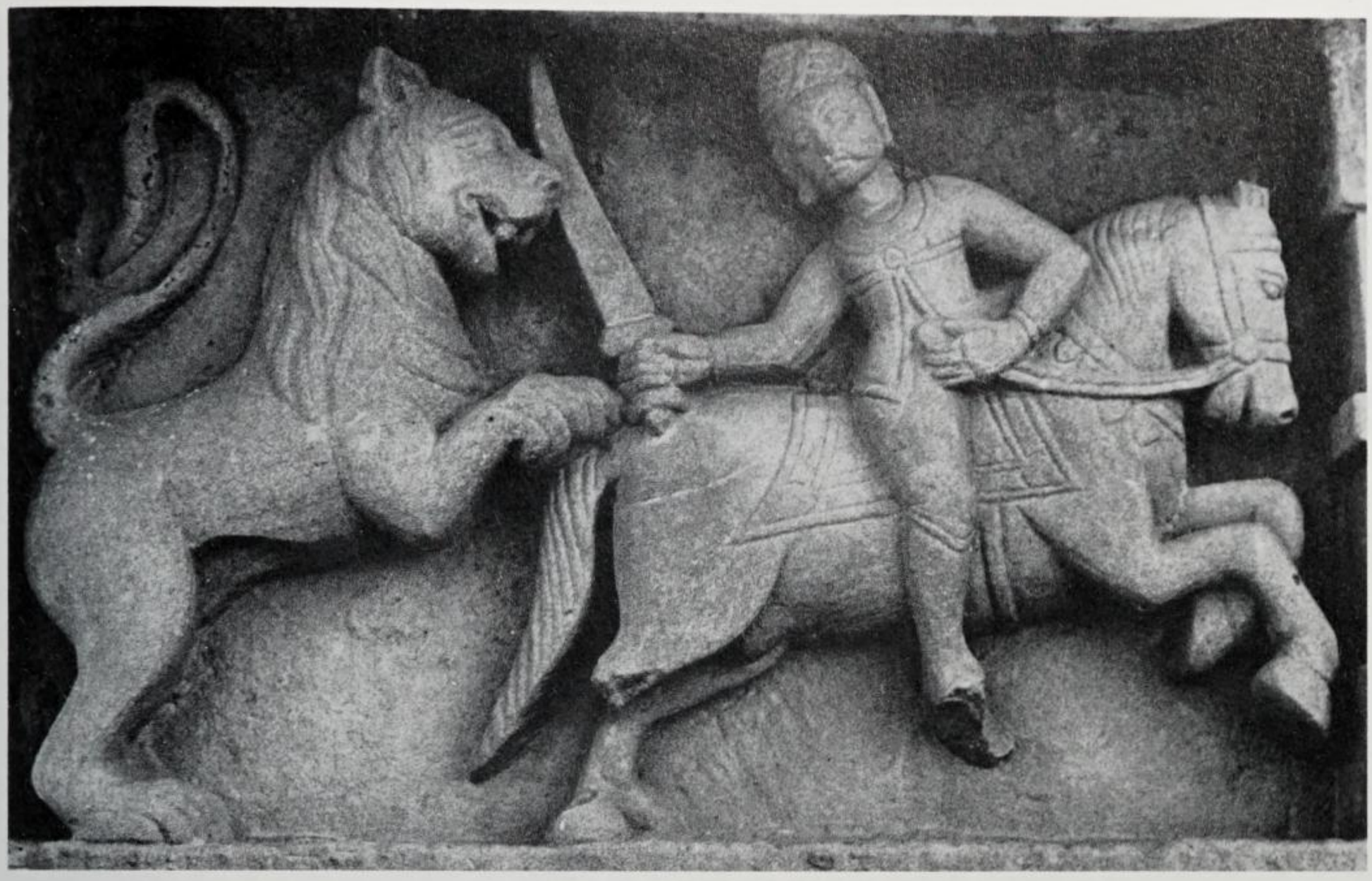


Plate 81. Mounted warrior and lion.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Chitragupta temple, Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century

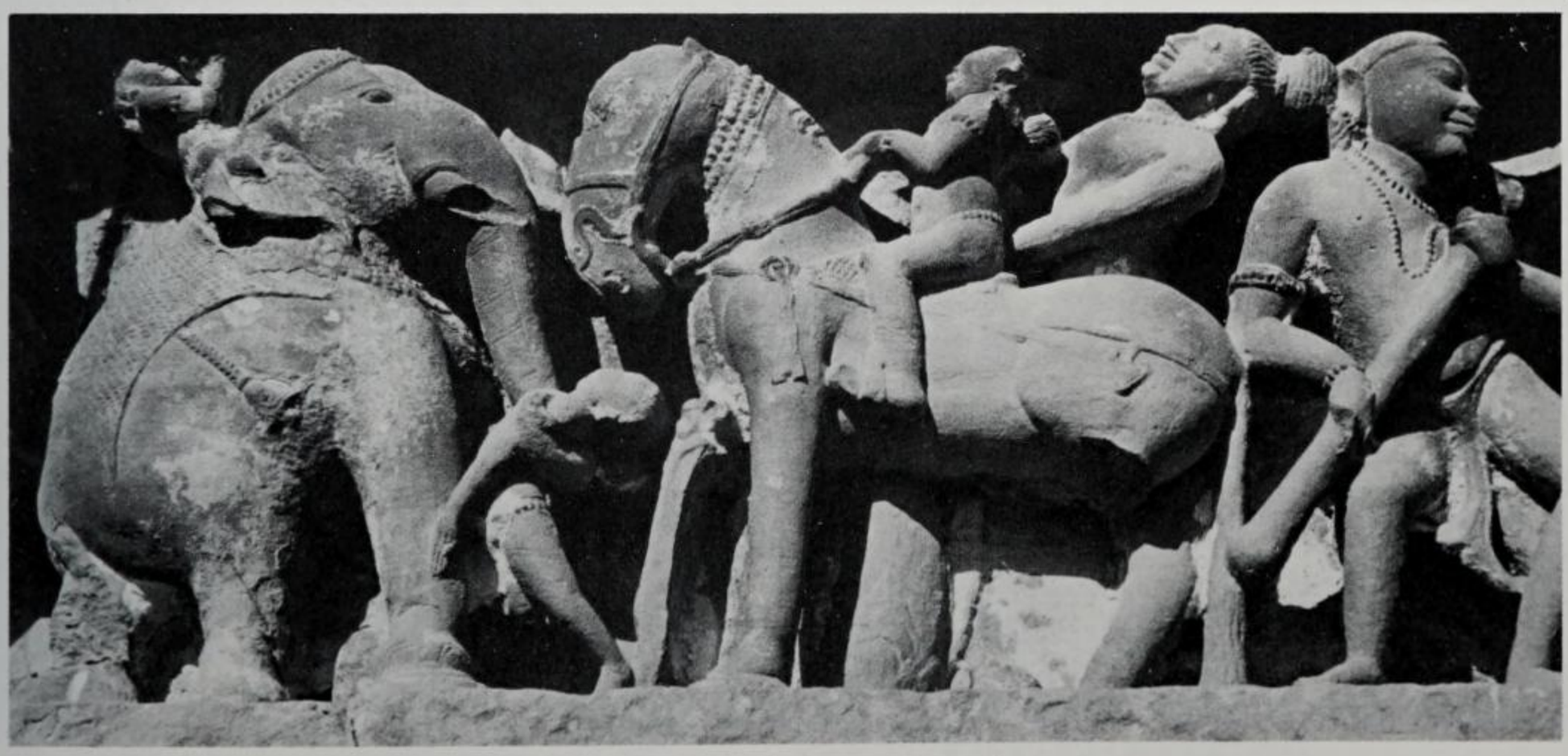


Plate 82. Rider on horse with elephant.
Basement frieze, sandstone.
Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century

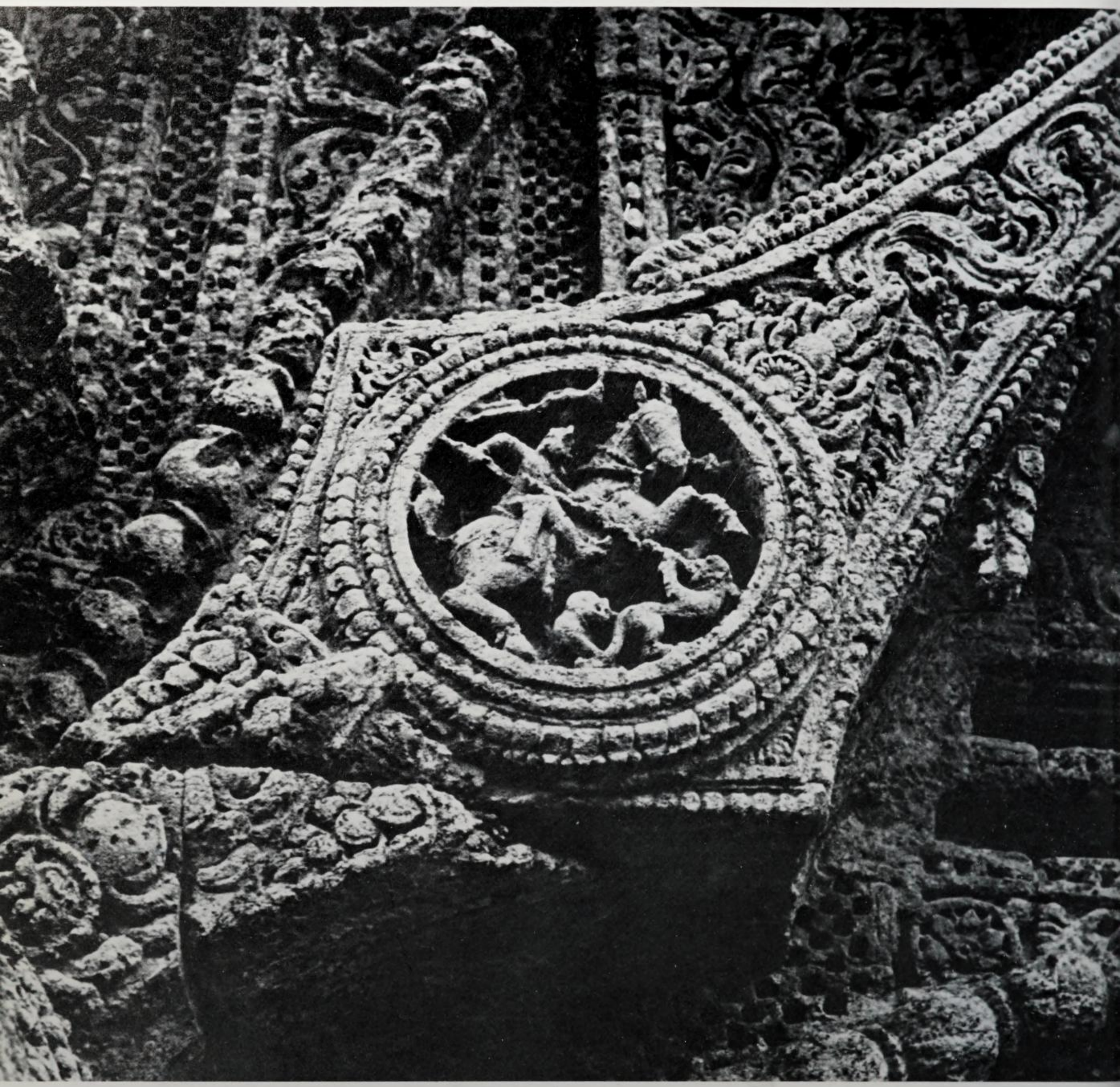


Plate 83. Rearing horse.
Detail of wheel on basement, khondalite.
Surva temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period, thirteenth century

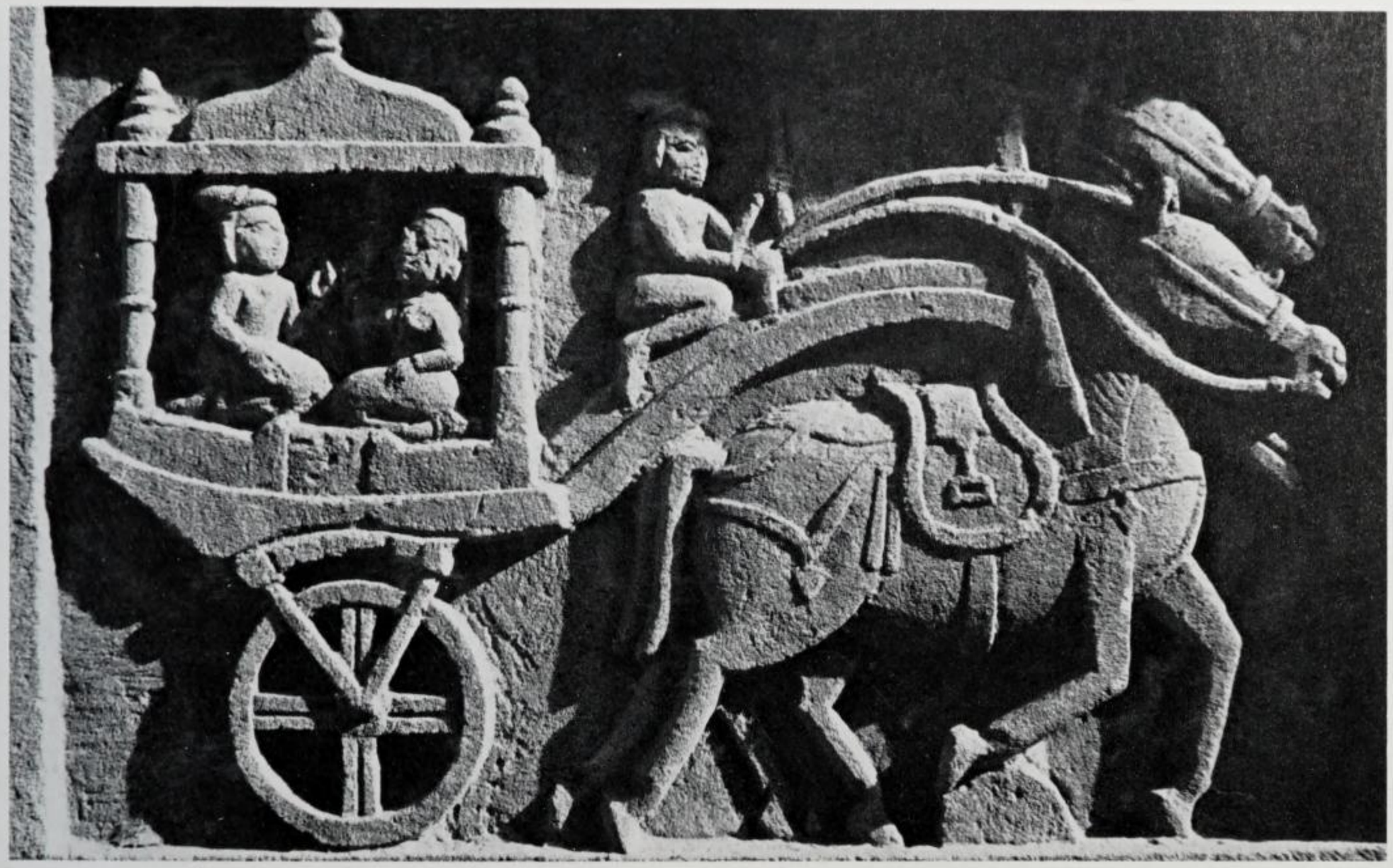


Plate 84. Horses pulling a cart.
Sculpture panel, sandstone.
Lodabara, Western India. Rajput period, fifteenth century

Plate 85. Woman with rearing horse.
Column panel, granite.
Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara period,
sixteenth century

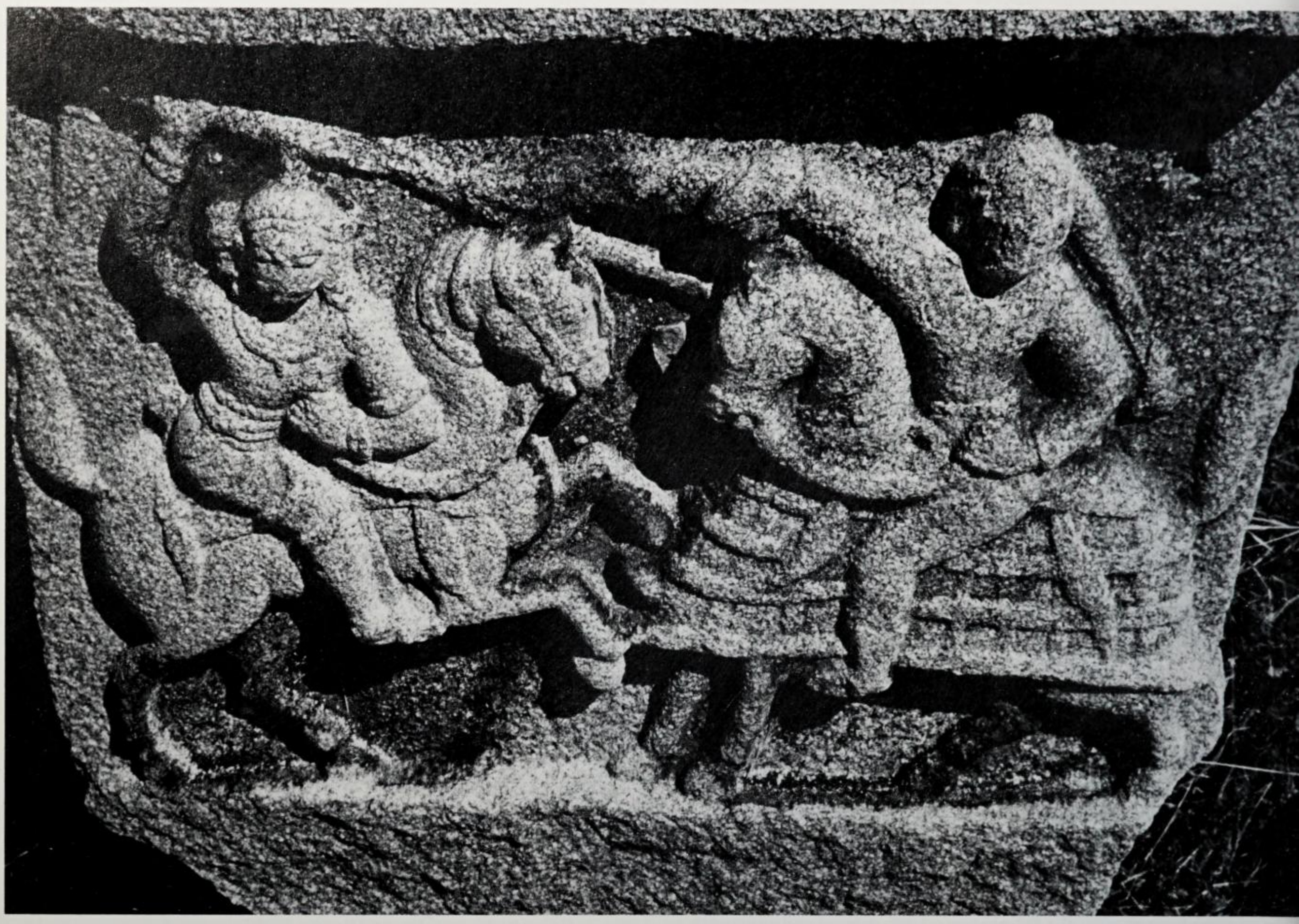


Plate 86. Mounted warriors.
Basement detail, granite.
Vijayanagara period, fourteenth century. Archaeological Museum, Kamalapuram

Plate 87. Dogs attacking a boar.
Column medallion, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 88. Seated dog.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Central India. Nineteenth century. Museum, Allahabad

Plate 89. Elephant with casket.
Railing detail, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Museum, Allahabad

Plate 90. Elephants with riders.
Gateway sculpture, sandstone.
Stupa 1, Sanchi, Central India. Satavahana period, first century

Plate 91. Elephant with prostrate figure.
Sculpture, khondalite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period, thirteenth century

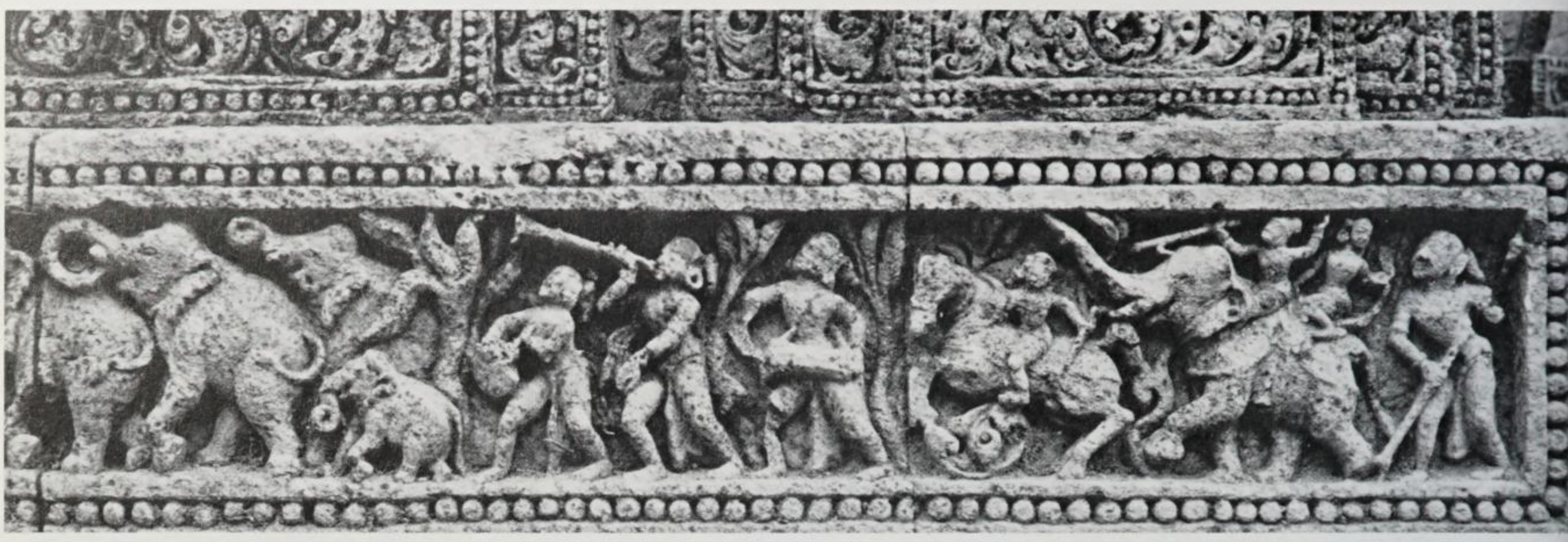


Plate 92. Elephants with riders and musicians.
Basement Frieze, khondalite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period, thirteenth century

Plate 93. Elephant on a boat.
Wall plaque, terracotta.
Eastern India. Malla period, eighteenth century. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 94. Camels with riders.
Detail of gateway post, sandstone.
Stupa 1, Sanchi, Central India. Satavahana period, first century

Plate 95. Camel with rider.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century. Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

Plate 96. Lion and hunter.
Column panel, sandstone.
Stupa 2, Sanchi, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 97. Hunters and leopard.
Column detail, granite.
Jalakanteshvara temple, Vellore, Southern India. Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

Plate 98. Vishnu on Garuda rescuing the elephant.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Dashavatara temple, Deogarh, Central India. Gupta period, fifth century

Plate 99. Snakes encircling a stupa.
Railing detail, sandstone.
Sarnath, Central India. Shunga period, first century B.C.
Archaeological Museum, Sarnath

Plate 100. Head of Parshvanatha.
Sculptural fragment, sandstone.
Varanasi, Central India. Kushana period, second century. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi

Plate 101. Vishnu sleeping on Shesha.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Dashavatara tample, Deogarh, Central India. Gupta period, fifth century

Plate 102. Snake held by Shiva.
Rock-cut panel, sandstone.
Ravana Phadi temple, Aihole, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, sixth century

Plate 103. Vishnu sleeping on Shesha.
Ceiling panel, sandstone.
Hucchappaya temple, Aihole, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, seventh century. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay

Plate 104. Shiva with serpent.
Sculpture, blue-green schist.
Samalaji, Western India. Maitraka period, seventh century. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay

Plate 105. Nagini.
Rock-cut composition, granite.
Arjuna's Penance, Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period, seventh century

Plate 106. Vasuki, the serpent, pulled by gods and demons.
Basement frieze, sandstone.
Mahanaleshvara temple, Menal, Western India. Paramara period, twelfth century

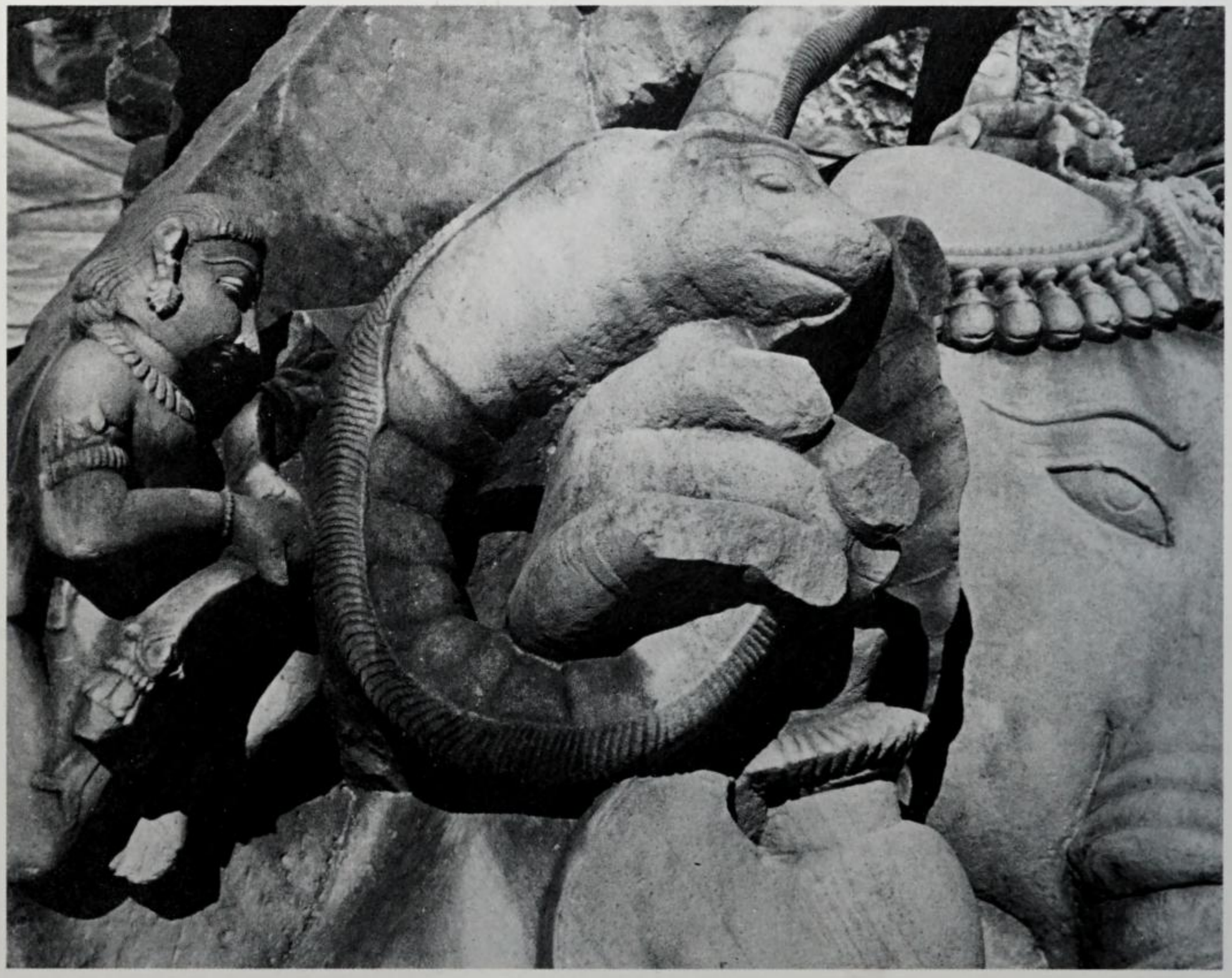


Plate 107. Ganesha holding a snake.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century. Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

Plate 108. Entwined naga and nagini.
Basement detail, khondalite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period,
thirteenth century

Plate 109. Snake and linga.
Column panel, granite.
Vitthala temple, Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara
period, sixteenth century

Plate 110. Markandeya embracing the linga.
Column panel, granite.
Ekambareshvara temple, Kanchipuram, Southern India. Vijayanagara period,
sixteenth century

Plate 111. Karttikeya on the peacock.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Cave 1, Badami, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, sixth century

Plate 112. Karttikeya on the peacock.
Wall panel, basalt.
Eastern India. Pala period, tenth or eleventh century. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 113. Subrahmanya on the peacock.
Wall panel, chlorite.
Hoysaleshvara temple, Halebid, Southern India. Hoysala period, twelfth century

Plate 114. Ascetic and goose.
Ceiling panel, sandstone.
Hucchappayya temple, Aihole, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, seventh century. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay

Plate 115. Rati on the parrot.
Sculpture panel, sandstone.
Naresar, Central India. Pratihara period, ninth century. Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior

Plate 116. Krishna fighting the crane.
Column detail, granite.
Jalakanteshvara temple, Vellore, Southern India.
Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

Plate 117. (opposite) Fish incarnation of Vishnu.
Doorway detail, sandstone.
Gadhwa, Central India. Pratihara period, tenth century

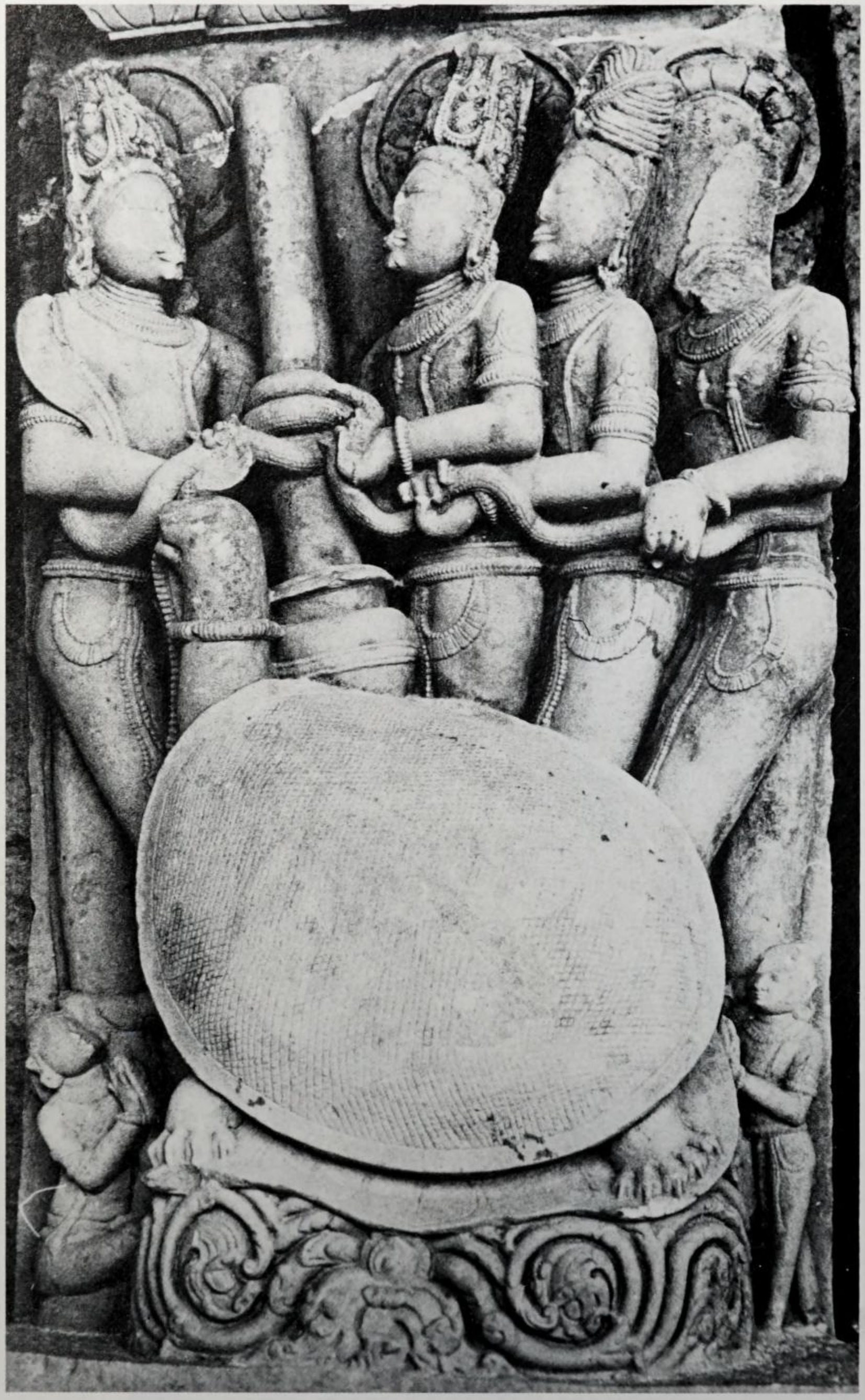


Plate 118. Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu.
Doorway detail, sandstone.
Gadhwa, Central India. Pratihara period,
tenth century

Plate 119. Ascetic seated on a fish.
Column panel, granite.
Jalakanteshvara temple, Vellore, Southern India. Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

Plate 120. Marichi with pigs.
Sculpture detail, basalt.
Nalanda, Eastern India. Pala period, tenth century

Plate 121. Varaha and Bhudevi.
Wall panel, sandstone.
"Durga" temple, Aihole, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, eighth century

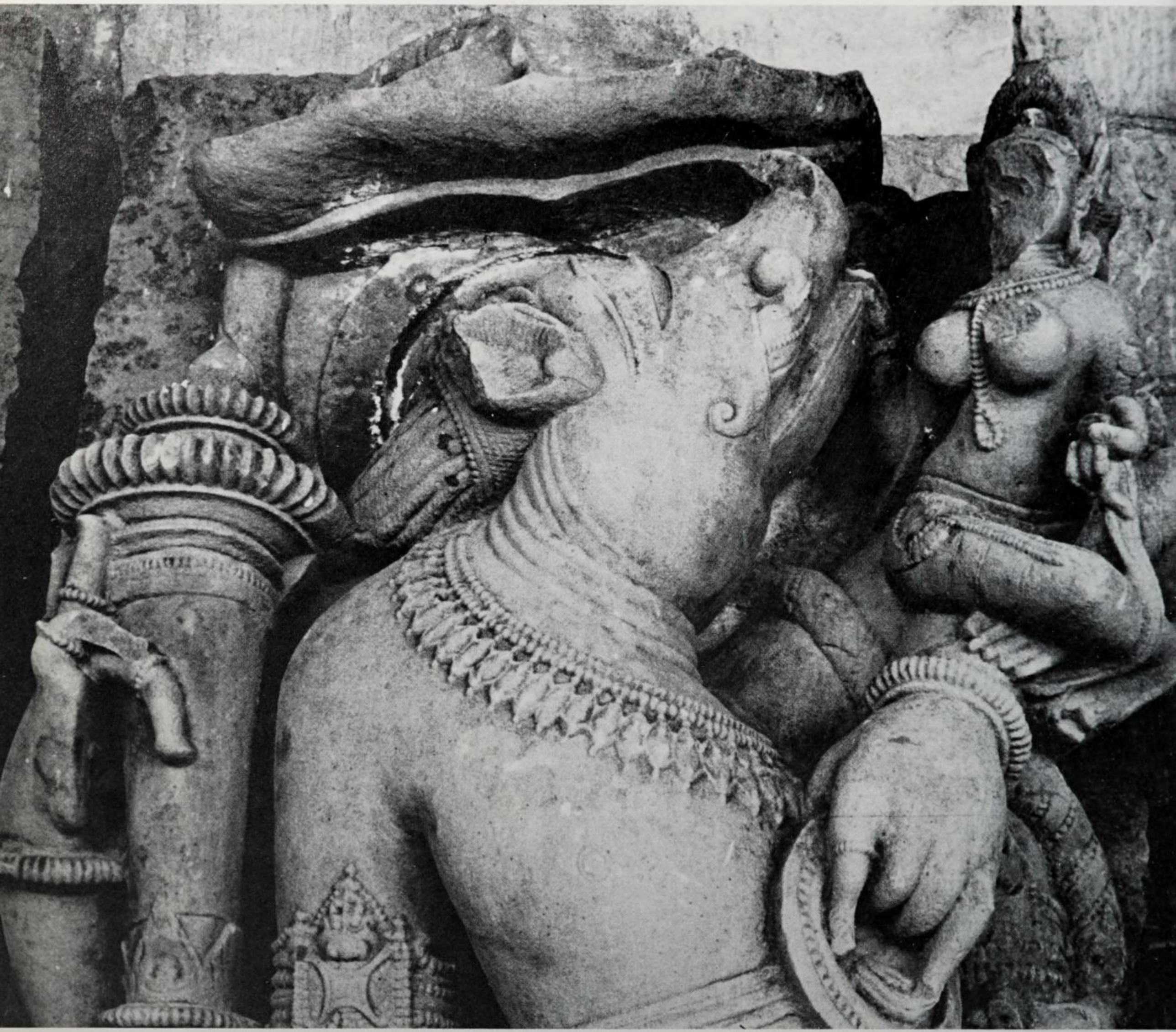
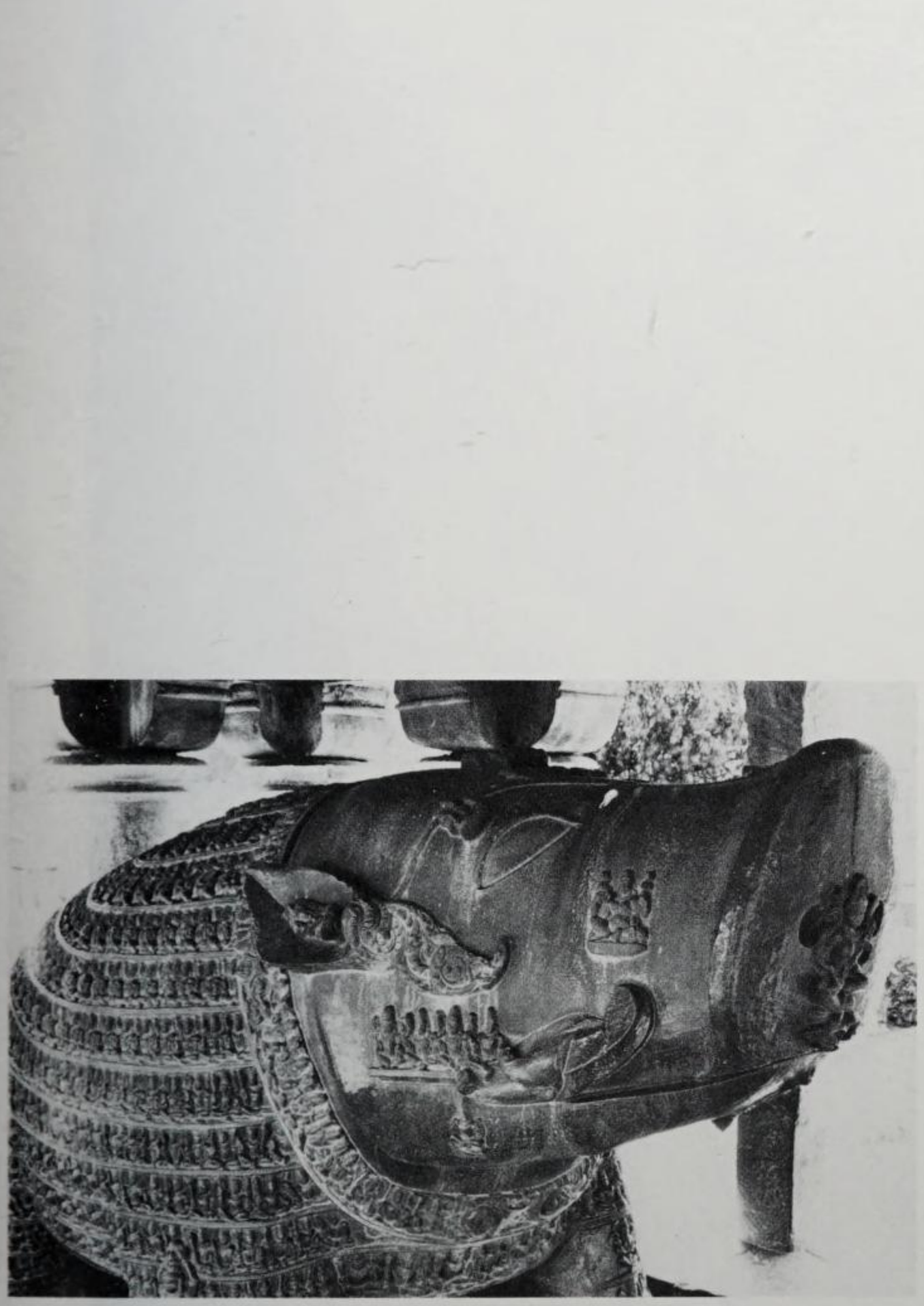


Plate 122. Varaha with Bhudevi.
Sculpture panel, sandstone.
Gadhwa, Central India. Pratihara period, tenth century



Plates 123 and 124. Varaha.
Free-standing sculpture, sandstone.
Varaha temple, Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century

Plate 125. Seated Monkey with serpent divinity.
Sculptural detail, granite.
Arjuna's Penance, Mamallapuram, Southern India. Pallava period, seventh century

Plate 126. Hanuman.
Isolated sculpture, sandstone.
Badoh, Central India. Pratihara period, tenth century

Plate 127. Hanuman.
Column panel, granite.
Jalakanteshvara temple, Vellore, Southern India. Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

Plate 128. Bhairava with dog.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Osian, Western India. Pratihara period, ninth century

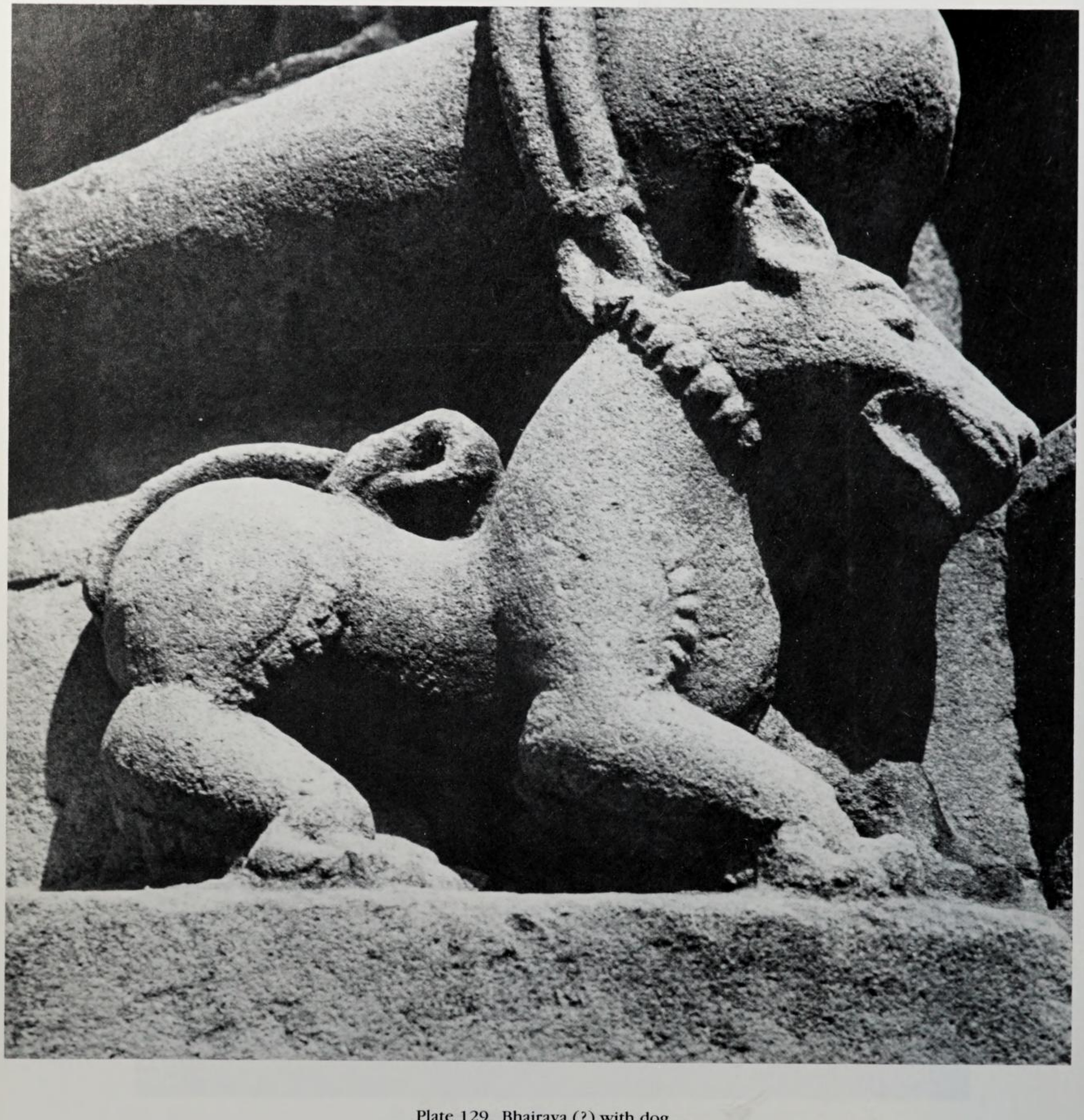


Plate 129. Bhairava (?) with dog.
Sculptural detail, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century. Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

Plate 130. Deer seated before a throne.
Detail of railing relief, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

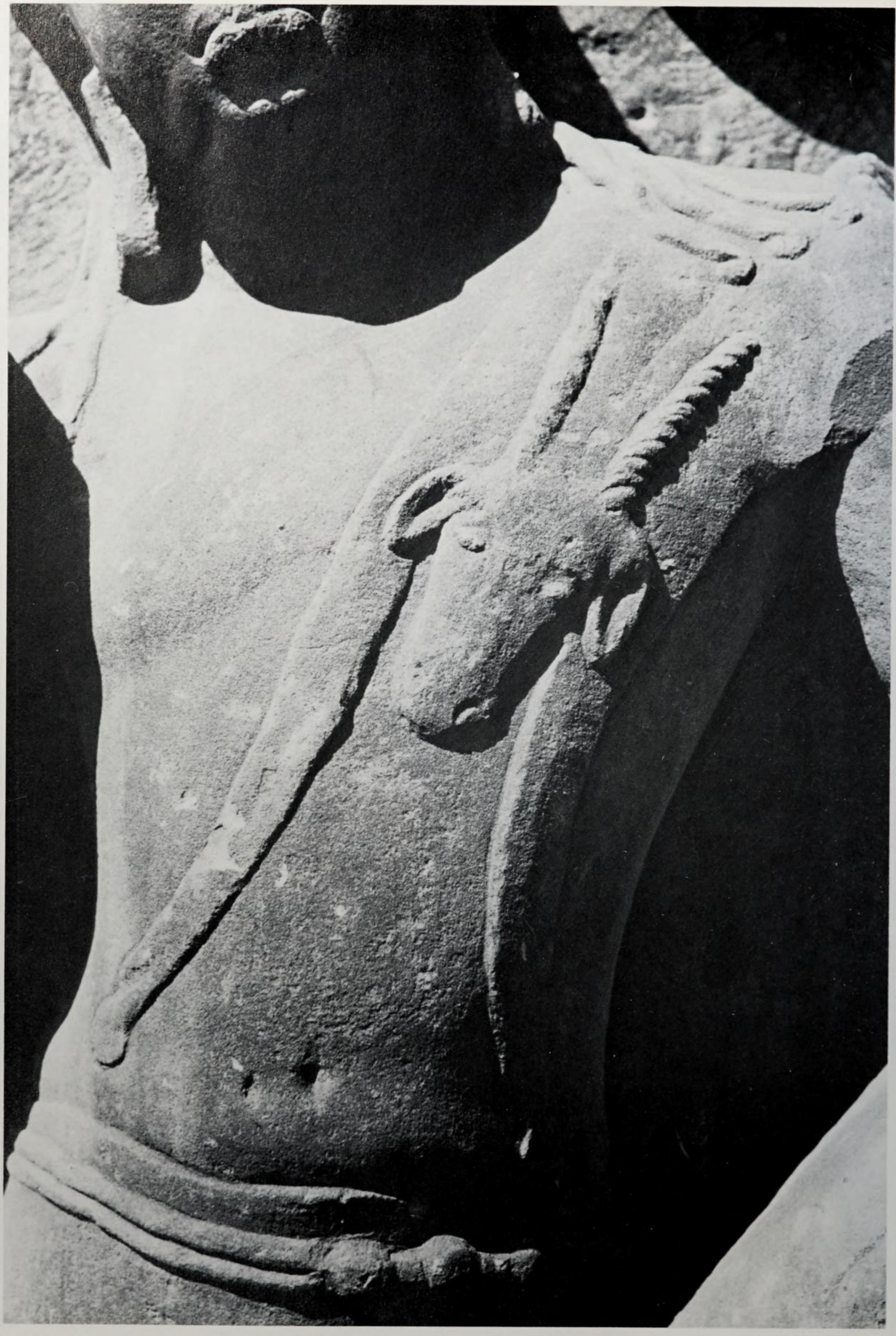


Plate 131. (opposite)
Narayana with antelope skin.
Detail of wall panel, sandstone.
Dashavatara temple, Deogarh, Central India.
Gupta period, fifth century

Plate 132. Deer and wheel of law.
Detail of sculpture panel, sandstone.
Rajgir, Eastern India. Post-Gupta period, seventh century.
Archaeological Museum, Nalanda

Plate 133. Krishna protecting the herds.
Plaque, terracotta.
Rangmahal, Western India. Gupta period, fifth century. Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner

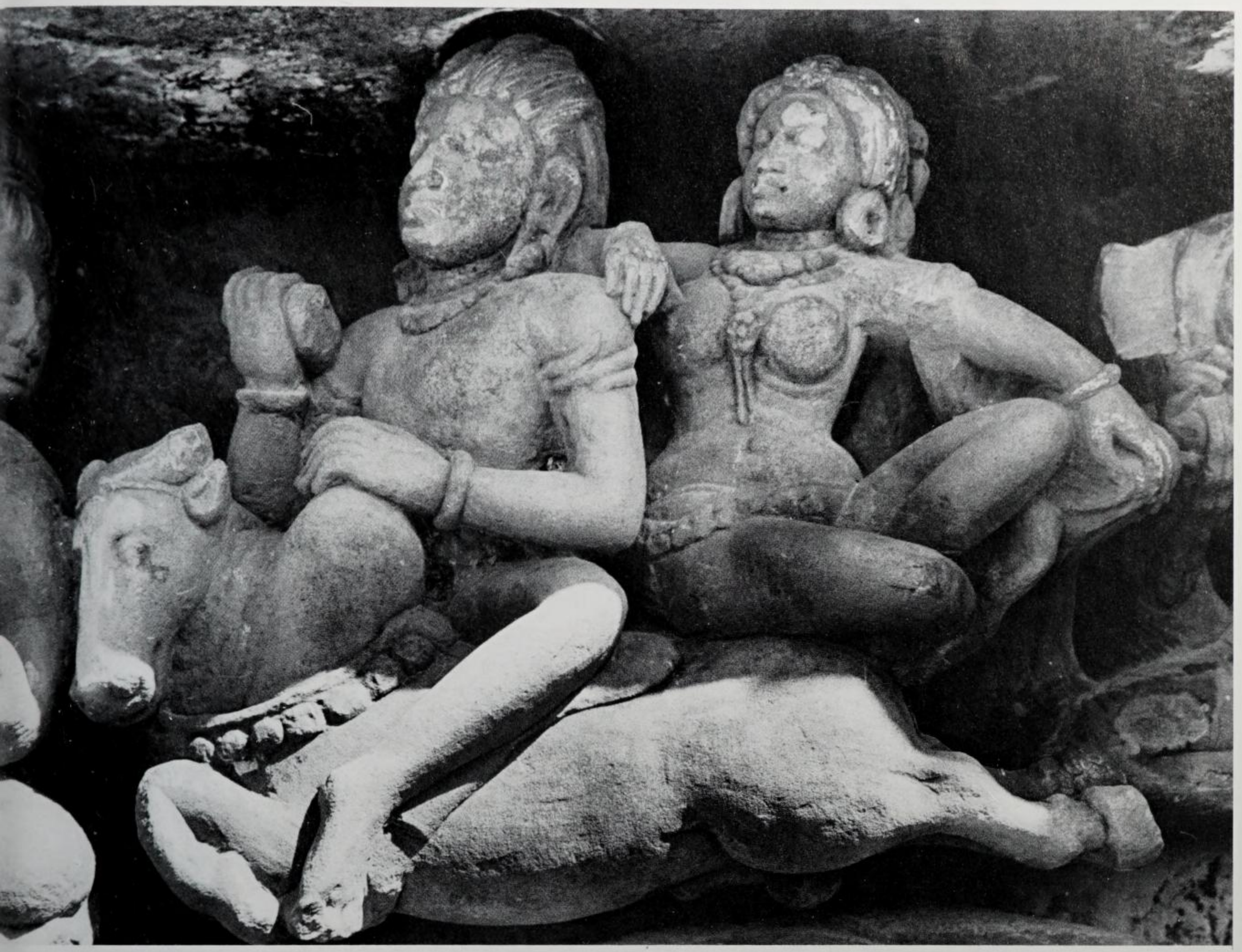


Plate 134. Shiva and Parvati on Nandi.
Detail of wall panel, sandstone.
Dashavatara temple, Deogarh, Central India. Gupta period, fifth century

Plate 135. Shiva on Nandi.
Sculptural detail, sandstone.
Suhania, Central India. Kacchapaghata period, eleventh century. Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior

Plate 136. Shiva and Parvati on Nandi.
Wall panel, schist.
Hoysaleshvara temple, Halebid, Southern India. Hoysala period, twelfth century

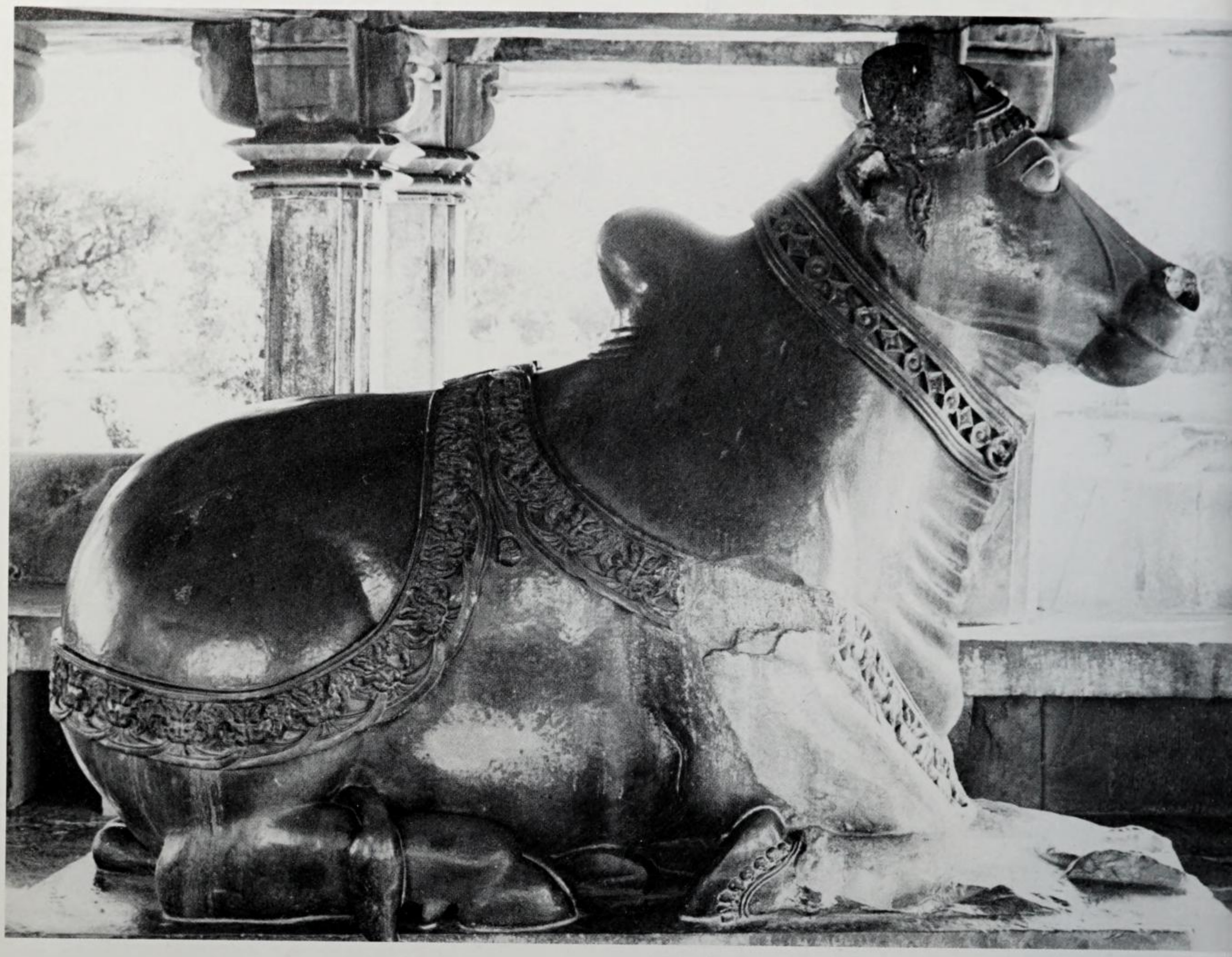


Plate 137. Nandi.
Sculpture, sandstone.
Vishvanatha temple, Khajuraho, Central India.
Chandella period, eleventh century

Plate 138. (opposite) Nandi.
Sculpture, polished basalt.
Doddar Basappa temple, Dambal, Deccan.
Late Chalukya period, twelfth century

Plate 139. Chariot with horses.
Wall panel, volcanic trap.
Cave 18, Bhaja, Deccan. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 140. Chariot of Surya.
Sculptural detail, basalt.
Kasipur, Eastern India. Pala period, ninth century. Asutosh Museum, University of Calcutta

Plate 141. Chariot of Surya.
Sculptural detail, chlorite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period, thirteenth century. National Museum, New Delhi

Plate 142. Agni on the ram.
Detail of ceiling panel, granite.
Bhoganandishvara temple, Nandi, Southern India. Nolamba period, ninth century

Plate 143. Agni and the ram.
Sculpture panel, basalt.
Eastern India. Pala period, tenth century.
State Archaeological Gallery of
West Bengal, Calcutta

Plate 144. Durga with Mahisha.
Detail of sculpture panel, sandstone.
"Durga" temple, Aihole, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, eighth century

Plate 145. Durga with Mahisha.
Sculptural detail, volcanic trap.
Elephanta, Deccan. Kalachuri period, sixth century. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay

Plate 146. Durga with Mahisha.
Sculpture panel, sandstone.
Surya temple 3, Osian, Western India. Pratihara period, ninth century

Plate 147. Elephants and stupas.
Frieze over doorway, granite.
Lomas Rishi cave, Barabar, Eastern India. Maurya period, third century B.C.

Plate 148. Indra visiting Buddha.
Frieze, schist.
Gandara, Northwest Pakistan. Kushana period, second century. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 149. Dream of Maya.
Column medallion, sandstone.
Bharhut, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Plate 150. Ganesha.
Pilaster medallion, sandstone.
Dashavatara temple, Deogarh, Central India.
Gupta period, fifth century

Plate 151. (opposite) Indra on the elephant.
Detail of ceiling panel, granite.
Bhoganandishvara temple, Nandi, Southern India.
Nolamba period, ninth century

Plate 152. (opposite) Dancing Ganesha.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Mrityunjaya temple, Jageshwar, Northern India.
Pratihara period, tenth century

Plate 153. Ganesha.
Sculpture, schist.
Hoysaleshvara temple, Halebid, Southern India.
Hoysala period, twelfth century

Plate 154. Lion throne of seated Buddha.
Detail of sculpture, sandstone.
Eastern India, Pala period, tenth century

Plate 155. (opposite) Narasimha.
Sculpture panel, sandstone.
"Durga" temple, Aihole, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, eighth century

Plate 156. Narasimha.
Sculpture panel, sandstone.
Kailasanatha temple, Kanchipuram, Southern India. Pallava period, eighth century

Plate 157. Varuna on a makara.
Detail of sculpture, chlorite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Eastern Ganga period, thirteenth century. National Museum, New Delhi

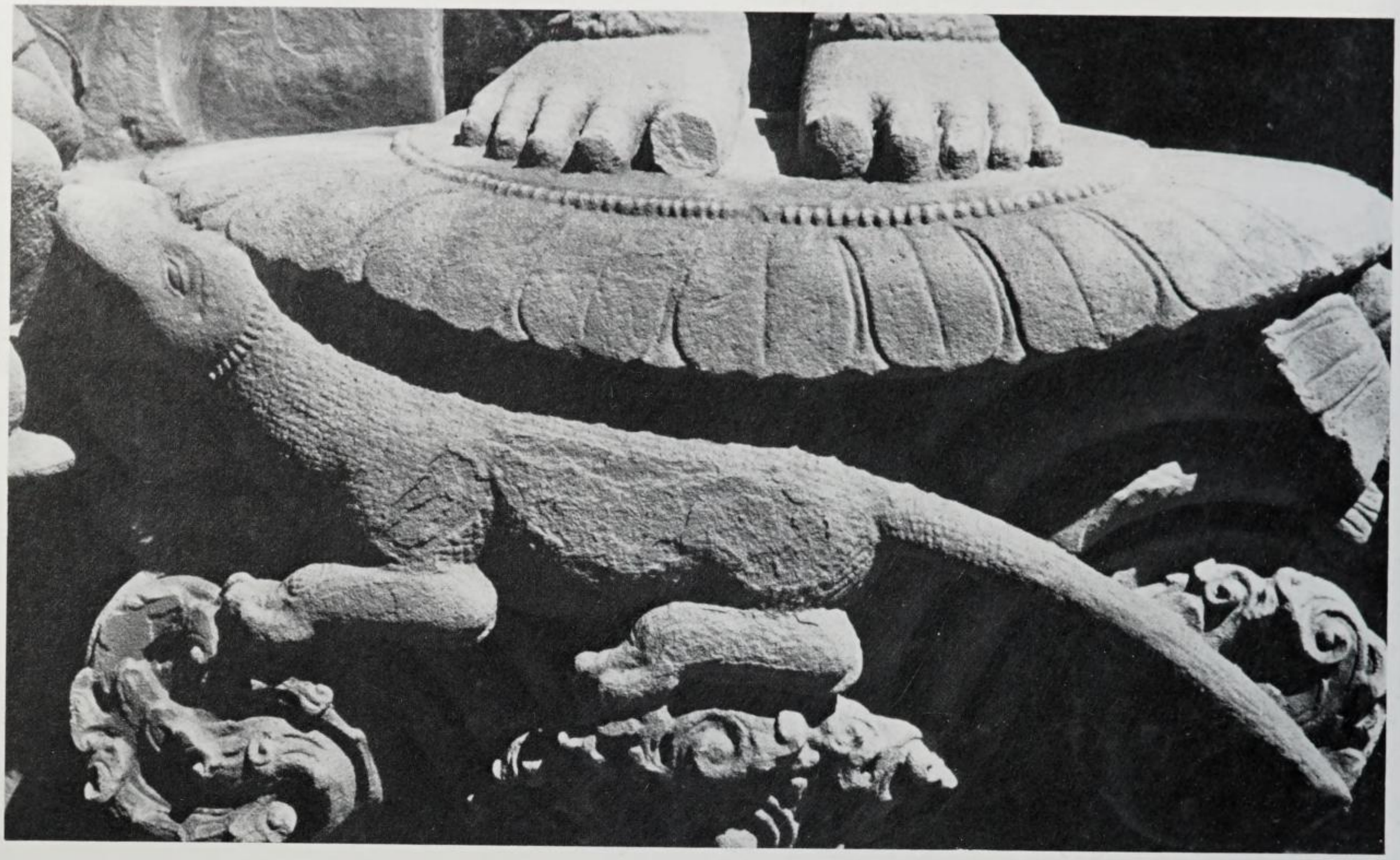


Plate 158. Lizard.
Sculptural detail, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh century. Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

FANTASTIC ANIMALS

Plate 159. Double lion.
Column capital, sandstone.
Gwalior, Central India. Pratihara period, ninth century. National Museum, New Delhi

Plate 160. Heads of beasts.
Basement detail, sandstone.
Shiva temple, Mundeshvari, Eastern India. Post-Gupta period, seventh century

Plate 161. Double-bodied lion and elephant.
Corner column base, sandstone.
Mukteshvara temple, Bhubaneshwar, Eastern India. Somavamshi period, tenth century

Plates 162 and 163. Rearing beast.
Sculpture, khondalite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India. Ganga period, thirteenth century

Plate 164. Elephant-vyala with fish tail.
Medallion on post, sandstone.
Stupa 2, Sanchi, Central India. Shunga period,
second century B.C.

Plate 165. Vyala masks.
Sculptured monolithic shrine, granite.
Tiger's Cave, near Mamallapuram,
Southern India. Pallava period, eighth century

Plate 166. (opposite) Rearing vyala.
Column sculpture, granite.
Jalakanteshvara temple, Vellore, Southern India.
Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

Plate 167. Vyala with elephant head.
Basement sculpture, volcanic trap.
Kailasanatha temple, Ellora, Deccan. Rashtrakuta period, eighth century

Plate 168. Vyala.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Central India. Pratihara period, ninth century. Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior

Plate 169. Vyala with fish tail.
Wall detail, sandstone.
Surwaya, Central India. Pratihara period, ninth century

Plate 170. Riders on vyalas.
Window sculpture, sandstone.
Chaturmukha Mahadeva temple, Nachna, Central India. Pratihara period, ninth century

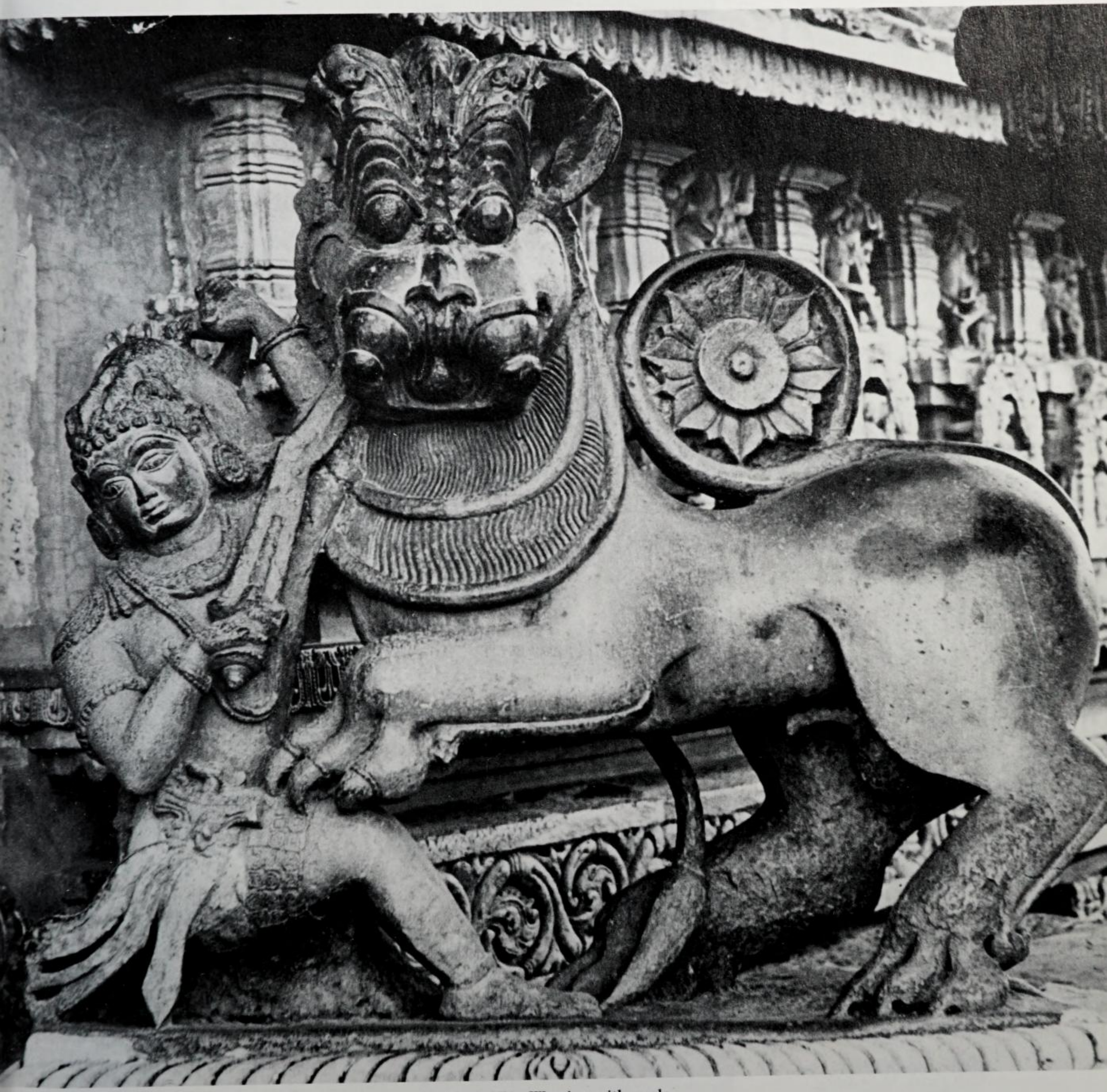


Plate 171. Warrior with vyala.
Doorway sculpture, chlorite.
Chennakeshava temple, Belur, Southern India. Hoysala period, twelfth century

Plate 172. Vyala.
Wall panel, khondalite.
Surya temple, Konarak, Eastern India.
Ganga period, thirteenth century

Plate 173. Rearing vyala.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Khajuraho, Central India. Chandella period, eleventh centur
Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

Plate 174. Vyala fighting an elephant.
Detail of balustrade, granite.
Vitthala temple, Vijayanagara, Deccan. Vijayanagara period, sixteenth century

Plate 175. Vyala.
Column medallion, sandstone.
Stupa 2, Sanchi, Central India. Shunga period, second century B.C.

Plate 176. Makaras.
Basement frieze, chlorite.
Hoysaleshvara temple, Halebid, Southern India. Hoysala period, twelfth century

Plate 177. Tortoise-bird.
Wall panel, sandstone.
Rama Pol, Chitorgarh, Western India. Rajput period, fifteenth century

Plate 178. (opposite) One-legged, Ram-headed Figure.
Plaque, terracotta.
Rangmahal, Western India. Gupta period, fifth century.
Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner

Plate 179. Composite Elephant and Bull.
Basement detail, sandstone.
Cave 3, Badami, Deccan. Early Chalukya period, sixth century